

Workers of All Countries, Unite!

V. I. Lenin

**On the Foreign Policy
of the Soviet State**



PROGRESS PUBLISHERS

Moscow

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

The translations are taken from the English edition of V. I. Lenin's *Collected Works* prepared by Progress Publishers, Moscow.

Corrections have been made in accordance with the Fifth Russian edition of the *Collected Works*.

First printing 1964
Second printing 1968
Third printing 1973

Printed in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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**The Struggle of the Soviet People
to Withdraw from the War
and Achieve a Democratic Peace**

SECOND ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS OF SOVIETS OF WORKERS' AND SOLDIERS' DEPUTIES¹

OCTOBER 25-26 (NOVEMBER 7-8), 1917

1

REPORT ON PEACE OCTOBER 26 (NOVEMBER 8)

The question of peace is a burning question, the painful question of the day. Much has been said and written on the subject, and all of you, no doubt, have discussed it quite a lot. Permit me, therefore, to proceed to read a declaration which the government you elect should publish.

DECREE ON PEACE

The workers' and peasants' government, created by the Revolution of October 24-25 and basing itself on the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, calls upon all the belligerent peoples and their governments to start immediate negotiations for a just, democratic peace.

By a just or democratic peace, for which the overwhelming majority of the working class and other working people of all the belligerent countries, exhausted, tormented and racked by the war, are craving—a peace that has been most definitely and insistently demanded by the Russian workers and peasants ever since the overthrow of the tsarist monarchy—by such a peace the government means an immediate peace without annexations (i.e., without the seizure of foreign lands, without the forcible incorporation of foreign nations) and without indemnities.

The Government of Russia proposes that this kind of peace be immediately concluded by all the belligerent nations, and expresses its readiness to take all the resolute measures now, without the least delay, pending the final

ratification of all the terms of such a peace by authoritative assemblies of the people's representatives of all countries and all nations.

In accordance with the legal consciousness of democrats in general, and of the working classes in particular, the government conceives the annexation or seizure of foreign lands to mean every incorporation of a small or weak nation into a large or powerful state without the precisely, clearly and voluntarily expressed consent and wish of that nation, irrespective of the time when such forcible incorporation took place, irrespective also of the degree of development or backwardness of the nation forcibly annexed to the given state, or forcibly retained within its borders, and irrespective, finally, of whether this nation is in Europe or in distant, overseas countries.

If any nation whatsoever is forcibly retained within the borders of a given state, if, in spite of its expressed desire—no matter whether expressed in the press, at public meetings, in the decisions of parties, or in protests and uprisings against national oppression—it is not accorded the right to decide the forms of its state existence by a free vote, taken after the complete evacuation of the troops of the incorporating or, generally, of the stronger nation and without the least pressure being brought to bear, such incorporation is annexation, i.e., seizure and violence.

The government considers it the greatest of crimes against humanity to continue this war over the issue of how to divide among the strong and rich nations the weak nationalities they have conquered, and solemnly announces its determination immediately to sign terms of peace to stop this war on the terms indicated, which are equally just for all nationalities without exception.

At the same time the government declares that it does not regard the above-mentioned peace terms as an ultimatum; in other words, it is prepared to consider any other peace terms, and insists only that they be advanced by any of the belligerent countries as speedily as possible, and that in the peace proposals there should be absolute clarity and the complete absence of all ambiguity and secrecy.

The government abolishes secret diplomacy, and, for its part, announces its firm intention to conduct all negotia-

tions quite openly in full view of the whole people. It will proceed immediately with the full publication of the secret treaties² endorsed or concluded by the government of landowners and capitalists from February to October 25, 1917.³ The government proclaims the unconditional and immediate annulment of everything contained in these secret treaties insofar as it is aimed, as is mostly the case, at securing advantages and privileges for the Russian land-owners and capitalists and at the retention, or extension, of the annexations made by the Great Russians.

Proposing to the governments and peoples of all countries immediately to begin open negotiations for peace, the government, for its part, expresses its readiness to conduct these negotiations in writing, by telegraph, and by talks between representatives of the various countries, or at a conference of such representatives. In order to facilitate such negotiations, the government is appointing its plenipotentiary representative to neutral countries.

The government proposes an immediate armistice to the governments and peoples of all the belligerent countries, and, for its part, considers it desirable that this armistice should be concluded for a period of not less than three months, i.e., a period long enough to permit the completion of negotiations for peace with the participation of the representatives of all peoples or nations, without exception, involved in or compelled to take part in the war, and the summoning of authoritative assemblies of the representatives of the peoples of all countries for the final ratification of the peace terms.

While addressing this proposal for peace to the governments and peoples of all the belligerent countries, the Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government of Russia appeals in particular also to the class-conscious workers of the three most advanced nations of mankind and the largest states participating in the present war, namely, Great Britain, France and Germany. The workers of these countries have made the greatest contributions to the cause of progress and socialism; they have furnished the great examples of the Chartist movement⁴ in England, a number of revolutions of historic importance effected by the French proletariat, and, finally, the heroic struggle against the

Anti-Socialist Law in Germany⁵ and the prolonged, persistent and disciplined work of creating mass proletarian organisations in Germany, a work which serves as a model to the workers of the whole world. All these examples of proletarian heroism and historical creative work are a pledge that the workers of the countries mentioned will understand the duty that now faces them of saving mankind from the horrors of war and its consequences, that these workers, by comprehensive, determined, and supremely vigorous action, will help us to conclude peace successfully, and at the same time emancipate the labouring and exploited masses of the population from all forms of slavery and all forms of exploitation.

The workers' and peasants' government, created by the Revolution of October 24-25 and basing itself on the support of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, must start immediate negotiations for peace. Our appeal must be addressed both to the governments and to the peoples. We cannot ignore the governments, for that would delay the possibility of concluding peace, and the people's government dare not do that; but we have no right not to appeal to the peoples at the same time. Everywhere there are differences between the governments and the peoples, and we must therefore help the peoples to intervene in questions of war and peace. We will, of course, insist upon the whole of our programme for a peace without annexations and indemnities. We shall not retreat from it; but we must not give our enemies an opportunity to say that their conditions are different from ours and that therefore it is useless to start negotiations with us. No, we must deprive them of that advantageous position and not present our terms in the form of an ultimatum. Therefore the point is included that we are willing to consider any peace terms and all proposals. We shall consider them, but that does not necessarily mean that we shall accept them. We shall submit them for consideration to the Constituent Assembly⁶ which will have the power to decide what concessions can and what cannot be made. We are combating

the deception practised by governments which pay lip-service to peace and justice, but in fact wage annexationist and predatory wars. No government will say all it thinks. We, however, are opposed to secret diplomacy and will act openly in full view of the whole people. We do not close our eyes to difficulties and never have done. War cannot be ended by refusal, it cannot be ended by one side. We are proposing an armistice for three months, but shall not reject a shorter period, so that the exhausted army may breathe freely, even if only for a little while; moreover, in all the civilised countries national assemblies must be summoned for the discussion of the terms.

In proposing an immediate armistice, we appeal to the class-conscious workers of the countries that have done so much for the development of the proletarian movement. We appeal to the workers of Britain, where there was the Chartist movement, to the workers of France, who have in repeated uprisings displayed the strength of their class-consciousness, and to the workers of Germany, who waged the fight against the Anti-Socialist Law and have created powerful organisations.

In the Manifesto of March 14,⁷ we called for the overthrow of the bankers, but, far from overthrowing our own bankers, we entered into an alliance with them. Now we have overthrown the government of the bankers.

The governments and the bourgeoisie will make every effort to unite their forces and drown the workers' and peasants' revolution in blood. But the three years of war have been a good lesson to the masses—the Soviet movement in other countries and the mutiny in the German navy, which was crushed by the officer cadets of Wilhelm the hangman. Finally, we must remember that we are not living in the depths of Africa, but in Europe, where news can spread quickly.

The workers' movement will triumph and will pave the way to peace and socialism. (*Prolonged applause.*)

**CONCLUDING SPEECH FOLLOWING
THE DISCUSSION ON THE REPORT ON PEACE
OCTOBER 26 (NOVEMBER 8)**

I shall not touch on the general character of the declaration. The government which your Congress sets up may amend unessential points.

I shall vigorously oppose lending our demand for peace the form of an ultimatum. An ultimatum may prove fatal to our whole cause. We cannot demand that, since some insignificant departure from our demands on the part of the imperialist governments would give them the opportunity of saying that it was impossible to enter into negotiations for peace because of our irreconcilability.

We shall send out our appeal everywhere, it will be made known to everybody. It will be impossible to conceal the terms proposed by our workers' and peasants' government.

It will be impossible to hush up our workers' and peasants' revolution, which has overthrown the government of bankers and landowners.

The governments may not reply to an ultimatum; they will have to reply to the text as we formulate it. Let everyone know what their governments have in mind. We do not want any secrets. We want a government to be always under the supervision of the public opinion of its country.

What will the peasant of some remote province say if, owing to our insistence on ultimatums, he will not know what another government wants? He will say: Comrades,

why did you rule out the possibility of any peace terms being proposed? I would have discussed them, I would have examined them, and would then have instructed my representatives in the Constituent Assembly how to act. I am prepared to fight by revolutionary methods for just terms if the governments do not agree, but there might be such terms for some countries that I would be prepared to recommend their governments to go on fighting by themselves. The full realisation of our ideas depends solely on the overthrow of the entire capitalist system. This is what the peasant might say to us, and he would accuse us of being excessively uncompromising over trifles, when for us the main thing is to expose all the vileness, all the baseness of the bourgeoisie and of its crowned and uncrowned hangmen at the head of the government.

We should not and must not give the governments an opportunity of taking refuge behind our uncompromising attitude and of concealing from the peoples the reason why they are being sent to the shambles. This is a tiny drop, but we should not and must not reject this drop, which will wear away the stone of bourgeois conquest. An ultimatum would make the position of our opponents easier. But we shall make all the terms known to the people. We shall confront all the governments with our terms, and let them give an answer to their people. We shall submit all peace proposals to the Constituent Assembly for decision.

There is still another point, comrades, to which you must pay the most careful attention. The secret treaties must be published. The clauses dealing with annexations and indemnities must be annulled. There are various clauses, comrades—the predatory governments, you know, not only made agreements between themselves on plunder, but among them they also included economic agreements and various other clauses on good-neighbourly relations.

We shall not bind ourselves by treaties. We shall not allow ourselves to be entangled by treaties. We reject all clauses on plunder and violence, but we shall welcome all clauses containing provisions for good-neighbourly relations and all economic agreements; we cannot reject these. We propose an armistice for three months; we choose a lengthy period because the peoples are exhausted, the peoples long

for a respite from this bloody shambles that has lasted over three years. We must realise that the peoples should be given an opportunity to discuss the peace terms and to express their will with parliament participating, and this takes time. We demand a lengthy armistice, so that the soldiers in the trenches may enjoy a respite from this nightmare of constant slaughter; but we shall not reject proposals for a shorter armistice; we shall examine them, and it is incumbent upon us to accept them, even if we are offered an armistice of a month or a month and a half. Nor must our proposal for an armistice have the form of an ultimatum, for we shall not give our enemies an opportunity of concealing the whole truth from the peoples, using our irreconcilability as a pretext. It must not be in the form of an ultimatum, for a government is criminal that does not desire an armistice. If we do not put our proposal for an armistice in the form of an ultimatum, we shall thereby show the peoples that the governments are criminal, and the peoples will not stand on ceremony with such criminals. The objection is raised that by not resorting to an ultimatum we are displaying weakness, but it is time to cast aside all bourgeois cant when speaking of the strength of the people. According to the bourgeois conception, there is strength when the people go blindly to the slaughter in obedience to the imperialist governments. The bourgeoisie admit a state to be strong only when it can, by the power of the government apparatus, hurl the people wherever the bourgeois rulers want them hurled. Our idea of strength is different. Our idea is that a state is strong when the people are politically conscious. It is strong when the people know everything, can form an opinion of everything and do everything consciously. We need not fear to tell the truth about fatigue, for what state today is not tired, what nation does not talk about it openly? Take Italy, where, owing to this tiredness, there was a prolonged revolutionary movement demanding the termination of the slaughter. Are there not mass demonstrations of workers in Germany that put forward a demand for the termination of the war? Was it not fatigue that provoked the mutiny in the German navy that was so ruthlessly suppressed by that hangman, Wilhelm,

and his hirelings? If such things are possible in so disciplined a country as Germany, where they are beginning to talk about fatigue and about putting an end to the war, we need not fear to say the same openly, because it is the truth, equally true both of our country and of all the belligerent and even non-belligerent countries.

Pravda No. 171,
November 10 (October 28), 1917

Collected Works, Vol. 26,
pp. 254-56

WIRELESS MESSAGE

**To All Regimental, Divisional, Corps, Army
and Other Committees,
to All Soldiers of the Revolutionary Army
and Sailors of the Revolutionary Navy**

On the night of November 7 the Council of People's Commissars sent a wireless message to Commander-in-Chief Dukhonin ordering him immediately and formally to propose an armistice to all the belligerent countries, both Allied and those hostile to us.

This message was received at Field Headquarters on November 8 at 5.05 a.m. Dukhonin was ordered to keep the Council of People's Commissars constantly informed of the progress of the negotiations and to sign the armistice agreement only after it had been approved by the Council of People's Commissars. Simultaneously, a similar proposal to conclude an armistice was formally submitted to all plenipotentiary representatives of the Allied countries in Petrograd.

Not having received a reply from Dukhonin by the evening of November 8, the Council of People's Commissars empowered Lenin, Stalin and Krylenko to ascertain the causes of the delay from Dukhonin over the direct line.

The conversation lasted from 2 a.m. to 4.30 a.m. on November 9. Dukhonin made numerous attempts to evade giving an explanation of his conduct and a precise reply to the orders of the government, but when Dukhonin was given a categorical order to enter immediately into formal negotiations for an armistice, he refused to obey. Thereupon, in the name of the Government of the Russian Re-

public, on behalf of the Council of People's Commissars, Dukhonin was informed that he was dismissed from his post for refusing to obey government orders and for conduct that entailed untold hardships for the working people of all countries and especially for the armies. At the same time, Dukhonin was ordered to continue his duties pending the arrival of a new Commander-in-Chief or a person empowered by the latter to take over from Dukhonin. Ensign Krylenko has been appointed the new Commander-in-Chief.

Soldiers, the cause of peace is in your hands! Do not allow the counter-revolutionary generals to frustrate the great cause of peace, place them under guard in order to avert acts of summary justice unworthy of a revolutionary army and to prevent these generals from escaping the trial that awaits them. Maintain the strictest revolutionary and military order.

Let the regiments at the front immediately elect representatives to start formal negotiations for an armistice with the enemy.

The Council of People's Commissars authorises you to do this.

Do everything possible to keep us informed of every step in the negotiations. The Council of People's Commissars is alone authorised to sign the final armistice agreement.

Soldiers, the cause of peace is in your hands! Maintain vigilance, restraint and energy, and the cause of peace will triumph!

In the name of the Government of the Russian Republic

V. Ulyanov (Lenin),

Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars

N. Krylenko,

People's Commissar for War and
Commander-in-Chief

FROM THE SPEECH
AT THE FIRST ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS
OF THE NAVY⁸
NOVEMBER 22 (DECEMBER 5), 1917

Minutes

"We are told that Russia will disintegrate and split up into separate republics but we have no reason to fear this. We have nothing to fear, whatever the number of independent republics. The important thing for us is not where the state border runs, but whether or not the working people of all nations remain allied in their struggle against the bourgeoisie, irrespective of nationality. (*Stormy applause.*)

"If the Finnish bourgeoisie are buying arms from the Germans in order to use them against their workers, we offer the latter an alliance with the Russian working people. Let the bourgeoisie start their filthy petty squabbles and their trading over frontiers, the workers of all countries and nationalities will not fall out over that sort of thing. (*Stormy applause.*)

"We are now 'conquering' Finland—to use a nasty word—but not the way the robber barons of international capitalism do. We are winning Finland over by giving her complete freedom to live in alliance with us or with others, guaranteeing full support for the working people of all nationalities against the bourgeoisie of all countries. It is not an alliance based on treaties, but on the solidarity of the exploited against the exploiters.

"We now see a national movement in the Ukraine and we say that we stand unconditionally for the Ukrainian people's complete and unlimited freedom. We have to wipe out that old bloodstained and dirty past when the Russia of the capitalist oppressors acted as the executioner of other peoples. We are determined to wipe out that past, and leave no trace of it. (*Stormy applause.*)

"We are going to tell the Ukrainians that as Ukrainians they can go ahead and arrange their life as they see fit. But we are going to stretch out a fraternal hand to the Ukrainian workers and tell them that together with them we are going to fight against their bourgeoisie and ours. Only a socialist alliance of the working people of all countries can remove all ground for national persecution and strife. (*Stormy applause.*)

"I shall now touch on the question of war. We have started a resolute struggle against the war brought on by the clash of robbers over their spoils. Until now all parties have spoken of this struggle but have not gone beyond words and hypocrisy. Now the struggle for peace is on. It is a difficult struggle. It is highly *naïve* to think that peace can be easily attained, and that the bourgeoisie will hand it to us on a platter as soon as we mention it. Those who ascribed this view to the Bolsheviks were cheating. The capitalists are embroiled in a life and death struggle over the share-out of the booty. One thing is clear: to kill war is to defeat capital, and Soviet power has started the struggle to that end. We have published and will continue to publish secret treaties. We are not going to be deterred in this by anyone's anger or slander. The bourgeois gentlemen are beside themselves because the people see why they have been driven to the slaughter. They threaten Russia with the prospect of another war, in which she will find herself isolated. But we are not going to be deterred by the bourgeoisie's fierce hatred for us and for our peace movement. It will be quite futile for them to try to incite the peoples against each other in this fourth year of the war. They are sure to fail. It is not only in this country, but in all the belligerent countries that the struggle against the imperialist Government at home is welling up. There has been an open mutiny in the navy even in

Germany, which the imperialists tried for decades to turn into an armed camp with the entire government machine geared to stamping out the slightest sign of popular discontent. To understand the significance of this mutiny, one has to be aware that police reprisals in Germany are unparalleled. But revolution is not made to order; it results from an outburst of mass indignation. Whereas it was quite easy to drive out a band of nitwits, like Romanov and Rasputin, it is immensely more difficult to fight against the organised and strong clique of German imperialists, both crowned and uncrowned. But we can and have to work hand in hand with the revolutionary class of working people in all countries. That is the path the Soviet Government has taken by making public the secret treaties and showing that the rulers of all countries are brigands. That is not propaganda by word but by deed." (*Stormy applause.*)

In conclusion the speaker dealt with the question of the peace talks⁹ and said:

"When the Germans gave an evasive reply to our demand not to transfer any troops to the Western and Italian fronts, we broke off the talks and shall resume them in a little while. And when we do tell this to the world, no German worker will remain ignorant of the fact that the peace talks had been broken off through no fault of ours. In the hypothetical case of the German working class siding with their government of imperialist plunderers and confronting us with the need to continue the war, the Russian people—who have always shed blood without a murmur, and have done the will of an oppressive government when quite ignorant of its aims and purposes—will undoubtedly throw their weight into the struggle with so much more courage and vigour when it came to fighting for socialism and freedom threatened with the bayonets of the world bourgeoisie. But we put our trust in the international solidarity of the working masses, who will surmount every obstacle and barrier in the struggle for socialism." (*Stormy applause.*)

DECLARATION OF RIGHTS OF THE WORKING AND EXPLOITED PEOPLE¹⁰

I. The Constituent Assembly resolves:

1. Russia is hereby proclaimed a Republic of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. All power, centrally and locally, is vested in these Soviets.

2. The Russian Soviet Republic is established on the principle of a free union of free nations, as a federation of Soviet national republics.

II. Its fundamental aim being to abolish all exploitation of man by man, to completely eliminate the division of society into classes, to mercilessly crush the resistance of the exploiters, to establish a socialist organisation of society and to achieve the victory of socialism in all countries, the Constituent Assembly further resolves:

1. Private ownership of land is hereby abolished. All land together with all buildings, farm implements and other appurtenances of agricultural production, is proclaimed the property of the entire working people.

2. The Soviet laws on workers' control and on the Supreme Economic Council are hereby confirmed for the purpose of guaranteeing the power of the working people over the exploiters and as a first step towards the complete conversion of the factories, mines, railways, and other means of production and transport into the property of the workers' and peasants' state.

3. The conversion of all banks into the property of the workers' and peasants' state is hereby confirmed as one of the conditions for the emancipation of the working people from the yoke of capital.

4. For the purpose of abolishing the parasitic sections of society, universal labour conscription is hereby instituted.

5. To ensure the sovereign power of the working people, and to eliminate all possibility of the restoration of the power of the exploiters, the arming of the working people, the creation of a socialist Red Army of workers and peasants and the complete disarming of the propertied classes are hereby decreed.

III. 1. Expressing its firm determination to wrest mankind from the clutches of finance capital and imperialism, which have in this most criminal of wars drenched the world in blood, the Constituent Assembly whole-heartedly endorses the policy pursued by Soviet power of denouncing the secret treaties, organising most extensive fraternisation with the workers and peasants of the armies in the war, and achieving at all costs, by revolutionary means, a democratic peace between the nations, without annexations and indemnities and on the basis of the free self-determination of nations.

2. With the same end in view, the Constituent Assembly insists on a complete break with the barbarous policy of bourgeois civilisation, which has built the prosperity of the exploiters belonging to a few chosen nations on the enslavement of hundreds of millions of working people in Asia, in the colonies in general, and in the small countries.

The Constituent Assembly welcomes the policy of the Council of People's Commissars in proclaiming the complete independence of Finland,¹¹ commencing the evacuation of troops from Persia,¹² and proclaiming freedom of self-determination for Armenia.¹³

3. The Constituent Assembly regards the Soviet law on the cancellation of the loans contracted by the governments of the tsar, the landowners and the bourgeoisie as a first blow struck at international banking, finance capital, and expresses the conviction that Soviet power will firmly pursue this path until the international workers' uprising against the yoke of capital has completely triumphed.

IV. Having been elected on the basis of party lists drawn up prior to the October Revolution, when the people were

not yet in a position to rise *en masse* against the exploiters, had not yet experienced the full strength of resistance of the latter in defence of their class privileges, and had not yet applied themselves in practice to the task of building socialist society, the Constituent Assembly considers that it would be fundamentally wrong, even formally, to put itself in opposition to Soviet power.

In essence the Constituent Assembly considers that now, when the people are waging the last fight against their exploiters, there can be no place for exploiters in any government body. Power must be vested wholly and entirely in the working people and their authorised representatives—the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies.

Supporting Soviet power and the decrees of the Council of People's Commissars, the Constituent Assembly considers that its own task is confined to establishing the fundamental principles of the socialist reconstruction of society.

At the same time, endeavouring to create a really free and voluntary, and therefore all the more firm and stable, union of the working classes of all the nations of Russia, the Constituent Assembly confines its own task to setting up the fundamental principles of a federation of Soviet Republics of Russia, while leaving it to the workers and peasants of each nation to decide independently at their own authoritative Congress of Soviets whether they wish to participate in the federal government and in the other federal Soviet institutions, and on what terms.

Written not later than
January 3 (16), 1918

Published in *Pravda* No. 2 and
Izvestia No. 2, January 4 (17), 1918

Collected Works, Vol. 26,
pp. 423-25

THE REVOLUTIONARY PHRASE¹⁴

When I said at a Party meeting that the revolutionary phrase about revolutionary war might ruin our revolution, I was reproached for the sharpness of my polemics. There are, however, moments, when a question must be raised sharply and things given their proper names, the danger being that otherwise irreparable harm may be done to the Party and the revolution.

Revolutionary phrase-making, more often than not, is a disease from which revolutionary parties suffer at times when they constitute, directly or indirectly, a combination, alliance or intermingling of proletarian and petty-bourgeois elements, and when the course of revolutionary events is marked by big, rapid zigzags. By revolutionary phrase-making we mean the repetition of revolutionary slogans irrespective of objective circumstances at a given turn in events, in the given state of affairs obtaining at the time. The slogans are superb, alluring, intoxicating, but there are no grounds for them; such is the nature of the revolutionary phrase.

Let us examine the groups of arguments, the most important of them at least, in favour of a revolutionary war in Russia today, in January and February 1918, and the comparison of this slogan with objective reality will tell us whether the definition I give is correct.

1

Our press has always spoken of the need to prepare for a revolutionary war in the event of the victory of socialism in one country with capitalism still in existence in the neighbouring countries. That is indisputable.

The question is—how have those preparations *actually* been made since our October Revolution?

We have prepared in this way: we had to demobilise the army, we were compelled to, compelled by circumstances so obvious, so weighty and so insurmountable that, far from a “trend” or mood having arisen in the Party against demobilisation, there was not a single voice raised against it. Anyone who wants to *give some thought* to the class causes of such an unusual phenomenon as the demobilisation of the army by the Soviet Socialist Republic before the war with a neighbouring imperialist state is finished will without great difficulty discover these causes in the social composition of a backward country with a small-peasant economy, reduced to extreme economic ruin after three years of war. An army of many millions was demobilised and the creation of a Red Army¹⁵ on *volunteer* lines was begun—such are the facts.

Compare these facts with the talk of a revolutionary war in January and February 1918, and the nature of the revolutionary phrase will be clear to you.

If this “championing” of a revolutionary war by, say, the Petrograd and Moscow organisations had not been an empty phrase we should have had other *facts* between October and January; we should have seen a determined struggle on their part against demobilisation. But there has been nothing of the sort.

We should have seen the Petrograders and Muscovites sending *tens of thousands* of agitators and soldiers to the front and should have received daily reports from there about their struggle against demobilisation, about the successes of their struggle, about the halting of demobilisation.

There has been nothing of the sort.

We should have had hundreds of reports of regiments forming into a Red Army, using terrorism to halt demobilisation, renewing defences and fortifications against a possible offensive by German imperialism.

There has been nothing of the sort. Demobilisation is in full swing. The old army does not exist. The new army is only just being born.

Anyone who does not want to comfort himself with mere words, bombastic declarations and exclamations must see that the "slogan" of revolutionary war in February 1918 is the emptiest of phrases, that it has nothing real, nothing objective behind it. This slogan today *contains* nothing but sentiment, wishes, indignation and resentment. And a slogan with such a content is called a revolutionary phrase.

Matters as they stand with our own Party and Soviet power as a whole, matters as they stand with the Bolsheviks of Petrograd and Moscow show that *so far* we have not succeeded in getting beyond the first steps in forming a volunteer Red Army. To hide from this unpleasant fact—and fact it is—behind a screen of words and at the same time not only do nothing to halt demobilisation but even *raise no objection* to it, is to be intoxicated with the sound of words.

A typical substantiation of what has been said is, for instance, the fact that in the Central Committee of our Party *the majority* of the most prominent opponents of a separate peace voted *against* a revolutionary war, voted against it both in January and in February. What does that mean? It means that everybody who is not afraid to look truth in the face recognises the impossibility of a revolutionary war.

In such cases the truth is evaded by putting forward, or attempting to put forward, arguments. Let us examine them.

2

Argument No. 1. In 1792 France suffered economic ruin to no less an extent, but a revolutionary war cured everything, was an inspiration to everyone, gave rise to enthusiasm and carried everything before it. Only those who do not believe in the revolution, only opportunists could oppose a revolutionary war in our, more profound revolution.

Let us compare this reason, or this argument, with the facts. It is a fact that in France at the end of the eighteenth century the *economic* basis of the new, higher mode of production was *first created*, and then, as a result, as a

superstructure, the powerful revolutionary army appeared. France abandoned feudalism before other countries, swept it away *in the course of a few years* of victorious revolution, and led a people who were not fatigued from any war, who had won land and freedom, who had been made stronger by the elimination of feudalism, led them to war against a number of economically and politically backward peoples.

Compare this to contemporary Russia. Incredible fatigue from war. A new economic system, superior to the organised state capitalism of technically well-equipped Germany, *does not yet exist*. It is only being founded. Our peasants have only a law on the socialisation of the land,¹⁶ but not one single year of free (from the landowner and from the torment of war) work. Our workers have begun to throw the capitalists overboard but have not yet managed to organise production, arrange for the exchange of products, arrange the grain supply and *increase* productivity of labour.

This is what we advanced towards, this is the road we took, but it is obvious that the new and higher economic system *does not yet exist*.

Feudalism overcome, bourgeois freedom consolidated, and a well-fed peasant opposed to feudal countries—such was the economic basis of the “miracles” in the sphere of war in 1792 and 1793.

A country of small peasants, hungry and tormented by war, only just beginning to heal its wounds, opposed to technically and organisationally higher productivity of labour—such is the objective situation at the beginning of 1918.

That is why any reminiscing over 1792, etc., is nothing but a revolutionary phrase. People repeat slogans, words, war cries, but are afraid to analyse objective reality.

Argument No. 2. Germany “cannot attack”, *her* growing revolution will not allow it.

The Germans “cannot attack” was an argument repeated millions of times in January and at the beginning of

February 1918 by opponents of a separate peace. The more cautious of them said that there was a 25 to 33 per cent probability (approximately, of course) of the Germans being unable to attack.

The facts refuted these calculations. The opponents of a separate peace here, too, frequently brush aside facts, fearing their iron logic.

What was the source of this mistake, which real revolutionaries (and not revolutionaries of sentiment) should be able to recognise and analyse?

Was it because we, in general, manoeuvred and agitated *in connection with* the peace negotiations? It was not. We had to manoeuvre and agitate. But we also had to choose "our own time" for manoeuvres and agitation—while it was still possible to manoeuvre and agitate—and also for calling a halt to all manoeuvres when the issue became acute.

The source of the mistake was that our relations of revolutionary co-operation with the German revolutionary workers were turned into an empty phrase. We helped and are helping the German revolutionary workers in every way we can—fraternisation, agitation, the publication of secret treaties, etc. That was help in deeds, real help.

But the declaration of some of our comrades—"the Germans cannot attack"—was an empty phrase. We have only just been through a revolution in our own country. We all know very well why it was easier for a revolution to *start* in Russia than in Europe. We saw that we could not check the offensive of Russian imperialism in June 1917,¹⁷ although our revolution had not only begun, had not only overthrown the monarchy, but had set up Soviets everywhere. We saw, we knew, we explained to the workers—wars are conducted by governments. To stop a bourgeois war it is necessary to overthrow the bourgeois government.

The declaration "the Germans cannot attack" was, therefore, tantamount to declaring "we know that the German Government will be overthrown *within the next few weeks*". Actually we did not, and could not, know this, and for this reason the declaration was an empty phrase.

It is one thing to be certain that the German revolution

is maturing and to do your part towards helping it mature, to serve it as far as possible by *work*, agitation and fraternisation, anything you like, but help the maturing of the revolution by *work*. That is what revolutionary proletarian internationalism means.

It is another thing to declare, directly or indirectly, openly or covertly, that the German revolution is *already mature* (although it obviously is not) and to base your tactics on it. There is not a grain of revolutionism in that, there is nothing in it but phrase-making.

Such is the source of the error contained in the "proud", "striking", "spectacular", "resounding" declaration "the Germans cannot attack".

4

The assertion that "we are helping the German revolution by resisting German imperialism, and are thus bringing nearer Liebknecht's victory over Wilhelm" is nothing but a variation of the same high-sounding nonsense.

It stands to reason that victory by Liebknecht—which will be possible and inevitable when the German revolution reaches maturity—would deliver us from all international difficulties, including revolutionary war. Liebknecht's victory would deliver us from the consequences of any foolish act of ours. But surely that does not justify foolish acts?

Does any sort of "resistance" to German imperialism help the German revolution? Anyone who cares to think a little, or even to recall the history of the revolutionary movement in Russia, will quite easily realise that resistance to reaction helps the revolution only when it is *expedient*. During a half century of the revolutionary movement in Russia we have experienced many cases of resistance to reaction that were not expedient. We Marxists have always been proud that we determined the expediency of any form of struggle by a precise calculation of the mass forces and class relationships. We have said that an insurrection is not always expedient; unless the prerequisites exist among the masses it is a gamble; we have often condemned

the most heroic forms of resistance by individuals as inexpedient and harmful from the point of view of the revolution. In 1907, on the basis of bitter experience we rejected resistance to participation in the Third Duma¹⁸ as inexpedient, etc., etc.

To help the German revolution we must either limit ourselves to propaganda, agitation and fraternisation as long as the forces are not strong enough for a firm, serious, decisive blow in an open military or insurrectionary clash, or we must accept that clash, *if we are sure* it will not help the enemy.

It is clear to everyone (except those intoxicated with empty phrases) that to undertake a serious insurrectionary or military clash *knowing* that we have no forces, *knowing* that we have no army, is a gamble that will not help the German workers but will make their struggle more difficult and make matters easier for their enemy and for our enemy.

5

There is yet another argument that is so childishly ridiculous that I should never have believed it possible if I had not heard it with my own ears.

“Back in October, didn’t the opportunists say that we had no forces, no troops, no machine-guns and no equipment, but these things all appeared during the struggle, when the struggle of class against class began. They will also make their appearance in the struggle of the proletariat of Russia against the capitalists of Germany, the German proletariat will come to our help.”

As matters stood in October, we had made a precise calculation of the *mass* forces. We not only thought, we *knew* with certainty, from the experience of the *mass* elections to the Soviets, that the overwhelming majority of the workers and soldiers had *already* come over to our side in September and in early October. We knew, even if only from the voting at the Democratic Conference,¹⁹ that the coalition had also lost the support of the peasantry—and that meant that our cause had *already* won.

The following were the *objective* conditions for the October insurrectionary struggle:

(1) there was no longer any bludgeon over the heads of the soldiers—it was abolished in February 1917 (Germany has not yet reached “her” February);

(2) the soldiers, like the workers, had already had enough of the coalition and had finished their conscious, planned, heartfelt *withdrawal* from it.

This, and this alone, determined the *correctness of the slogan* “for an insurrection” *in October* (the slogan would have been incorrect in July, when we did *not* advance it).

The mistake of the opportunists of October²⁰ was not their “concern” for objective conditions (only children could think it was) but their *incorrect appraisal of facts*—they got hold of trivialities and did not see the *main thing*, that the Soviets had come over from conciliation to us.

To compare an armed clash with Germany (that has not yet experienced “her” February or her “July”, to say nothing of October), with a Germany that has a *monarchist*, bourgeois-imperialist government—to compare that with the October insurrectionary struggle against the enemies of the Soviets, the Soviets that had been maturing since February 1917 and had reached maturity in September and October, is such childishness that it is only a subject for ridicule. Such is the absurdity to which people are led by empty phrases!

6

Here is another sort of argument. “But Germany will strangle us economically with a separate peace treaty, she will take away coal and grain and will enslave us.”

A very wise argument—we must accept an armed clash, *without an army*, even though that clash is certain to result not only in our enslavement, but also in our strangulation, the seizure of grain without any compensation, putting us in the position of Serbia or Belgium; we have to accept that, because *otherwise* we shall get an unfavourable treaty, Germany will take from us 6,000 or 12,000 million in tribute by instalments, will take grain for machines, etc.

O heroes of the revolutionary phrase! In renouncing the “enslavement” to the imperialists they *modestly* pass

over in silence the fact that it is necessary to *defeat* imperialism to be completely delivered from enslavement.

We are accepting an unfavourable treaty and a separate peace knowing that *today* we are not yet ready for a revolutionary war, that we have to bide our time (as we did when we tolerated Kerensky's bondage, tolerated the bondage of our own bourgeoisie from July to October), we must wait until we are stronger. Therefore, *if there is a chance* of obtaining the most unfavourable separate peace, we *absolutely must accept* it in the interests of the socialist revolution, which is *still* weak (since the maturing revolution in Germany has not *yet* come to our help, to the help of the Russians). Only if a separate peace is *absolutely impossible* shall we have to fight immediately —*not because it will be correct tactics, but because we shall have no choice*. If it proves impossible there will be no occasion for a dispute over tactics. There will be nothing but the inevitability of the most furious resistance. But as long as we have a choice we must choose a separate peace and an extremely unfavourable treaty, because that will still be a hundred times better than the position of Belgium.

Month by month we are growing stronger, although we are today still weak. Month by month the international socialist revolution is maturing in Europe, although it is not yet fully mature. Therefore...therefore, "revolutionaries" (God save us from them) argue that we must accept battle when German imperialism is *obviously* stronger than we are but is *weakening* month by month (because of the slow but certain maturing of the revolution in Germany).

The "revolutionaries" of sentiment argue magnificently, they argue superbly!

The last argument, the most specious and most widespread, is that "this obscene peace is a disgrace, it is betrayal of Latvia, Poland, Courland and Lithuania"

Is it any wonder that the Russian bourgeoisie (and their hangers-on, the *Novy Luch*, *Dyelo Naroda* and

*Novaya Zhizn*²¹ gang) are the most zealous in elaborating this allegedly internationalist argument?

No, it is no wonder, for this argument is a trap into which the bourgeoisie are deliberately dragging the Russian Bolsheviks, and into which some of them are falling unwittingly, because of their love of phrases.

Let us examine the argument from the standpoint of theory; which should be put first, the right of nations to self-determination, or socialism?

Socialism should.

Is it permissible, because of a contravention of the right of nations to self-determination, to allow the Soviet Socialist Republic to be devoured, to expose it to the blows of imperialism at a time when imperialism is obviously stronger and the Soviet Republic obviously weaker?

No, it is not permissible—that is *bourgeois* and not socialist politics.

Further, would peace on the condition that Poland, Lithuania and Courland are returned “to us” be *less* disgraceful, be any less an annexationist peace?

From the point of view of the Russian bourgeoisie, *it would*.

From the point of view of the socialist-internationalist, *it would not*.

Because if German imperialism set Poland free (which at one time some *bourgeois* in Germany desired), it would squeeze Serbia, Belgium, etc., *all the more*.

When the Russian bourgeoisie wail against the “obscene” peace, they are correctly expressing their class interests.

But when some Bolsheviks (suffering from the phrase disease) repeat that argument, it is simply very sad.

Examine the *facts* relating to the behaviour of the Anglo-French bourgeoisie. They are doing everything they can to drag us into the war against Germany now, they are offering us millions of blessings, boots, potatoes, shells, locomotives (on credit . . . that is not “enslavement”, don’t fear that! It is “only” credit!). They want us to fight against Germany *now*.

It is obvious why they should want this; they want it because, in the first place, we should engage part of the

German forces. And secondly, because Soviet power might collapse most easily from an untimely armed clash with German imperialism.

The Anglo-French bourgeoisie are setting a trap for us: please be kind enough to go and fight *now*, our gain will be magnificent. The Germans will plunder you, will "do well" in the East, will agree to cheaper terms in the West, and furthermore, Soviet power will be swept away.... Please do fight, Bolshevik "allies", we shall help you!

And the "Left" (God save us from them) Bolsheviks are walking into the trap by reciting the most revolutionary phrases....

Oh yes, one of the manifestations of the traces of the petty-bourgeois spirit is surrender to revolutionary phrases. This is an old story that is perennially new....

8

In the summer of 1907 our Party also experienced an attack of the revolutionary phrase that was, in some respects, analogous.

St. Petersburg and Moscow, nearly all the Bolsheviks were in favour of boycotting the Third Duma; they were guided by "sentiment" instead of an objective analysis and walked into a trap.

The disease has recurred.

The times are more difficult. The issue is a million times more important. To fall ill at such a time is to risk ruining the revolution.

We must fight against the revolutionary phrase, we have to fight it, we absolutely must fight it, so that at some future time people will not say of us the bitter truth that "the revolutionary phrase about revolutionary war ruined the revolution".

STRANGE AND MONSTROUS

The Moscow Regional Bureau²² of our Party, in a resolution adopted on February 24, 1918, has expressed lack of confidence in the Central Committee, refused to obey those of its decisions "that will be connected with the implementation of the terms of the peace treaty with Austria and Germany", and, in an "explanatory note" to the resolution, declared that it "considers a split in the Party in the very near future hardly avoidable".*

There is nothing monstrous, nor even strange in all this. It is quite natural that comrades who sharply disagree with the Central Committee over the question of a separate peace should sharply condemn the Central Committee and express their conviction that a split is inevitable. All that is the most legitimate right of Party members, which is quite understandable.

But here is what is strange and monstrous. An "explanatory note" is appended to the resolution. Here it is in full:

"The Moscow Regional Bureau considers a split in the Party in the very near future hardly avoidable, and it sets

* Here is the full text of the resolution: "Having discussed the activities of the Central Committee, the Moscow Regional Bureau of the R.S.D.L.P. expresses lack of confidence in the Central Committee in view of its political line and composition, and will at the first opportunity insist that a new Central Committee be elected. Furthermore, the Moscow Regional Bureau does not consider itself bound to obey unreservedly those decisions of the Central Committee that will be connected with the implementation of the terms of the peace treaty with Austria and Germany." The resolution was adopted unanimously.

itself the aim of helping to unite all consistent revolutionary communists who equally oppose both the advocates of the conclusion of a separate peace and all moderate opportunists in the Party. *In the interests of the world revolution, we consider it expedient to accept the possibility of losing Soviet power, which is now becoming purely formal.* We maintain as before that our primary task is to spread the ideas of the socialist revolution to all other countries and resolutely to promote the workers' dictatorship, ruthlessly to suppress bourgeois counter-revolution in Russia."

It is the words we have stressed in this passage which are—strange and monstrous.

It is in these words that the crux of the matter lies.

These words reduce to an absurdity the whole line put forward by the authors of the resolution. These words expose the root of their error with exceptional clarity.

"In the interests of the world revolution it is expedient to accept the possibility of losing Soviet power...." That is strange, for there is not even any connection between the premises and the conclusion. "In the interests of the world revolution it is expedient to accept *military defeat of Soviet power*"—such a proposition might be right or wrong, but it could not be called strange. That is the first thing.

Second thing: Soviet power "is now becoming purely formal". Now this is not only strange but downright monstrous. Obviously, the authors have got themselves thoroughly entangled. We shall have to disentangle them.

As regards the first question, the authors' idea evidently is that it would be expedient in the interests of the world revolution to accept the possibility of defeat in war, which would lead to the loss of Soviet power, in other words, to the triumph of the bourgeoisie in Russia. By voicing this idea the authors indirectly admit the truth of what I said in the theses (on January 8, 1918, published in *Pravda* on February 24, 1918),* namely, that refusal to accept the peace terms presented by Germany would lead to Russia's defeat and the overthrow of Soviet power.

* See *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, pp. 442-50.—Ed.

And so, *la raison finit toujours par avoir raison*—the truth always triumphs! My “extremist” opponents, the Muscovites who threaten a split, have been obliged—just because they have got to the point of talking openly of a split—to be equally explicit about their *real* reasons, the reasons which people who confine themselves to general phrase-making about revolutionary war prefer to pass over in silence. The very essence of my theses and arguments (as anyone who cares to read attentively my theses of January 7, 1918, may see) is that we must accept this extremely harsh peace *now*, at once, while at the same time seriously *preparing* for a revolutionary war (and accept it, moreover, precisely *in the interest* of such serious preparations). Those who confined themselves to general phrase-making about a revolutionary war ignored or failed to notice, or did not want to notice, the very essence of my arguments. And now it is my “extremist” opponents, the Muscovites, whom I have to thank from the bottom of my heart for having broken the “conspiracy of silence” over the *essence* of my arguments. The Muscovites have been the *first* to reply to them.

And what is their reply?

Their reply is an *admission of the correctness* of my *concrete* argument. Yes, the Muscovites have admitted, we shall certainly be defeated if we fight the Germans now.* Yes, this defeat would certainly lead to the fall of Soviet power.

Again and again I thank my “extremist” opponents, the Muscovites, from the bottom of my heart for having broken the “conspiracy of silence” against the essence of my arguments, i.e., against my *concrete* statement as to what the conditions of war would be, if we were to accept it at once, and for having fearlessly admitted the correctness of my *concrete* statement.

* As to the counter-argument, that to avoid fighting was anyway impossible, the reply has been given by the facts: On January 8 my theses were read; by January 15 we *might* have had peace. A respite would have been certainly assured (and for us even the briefest respite would have been of gigantic significance, both materially and morally, for the *Germans* would have had to declare a *new* war), if . . . if it had not been for revolutionary phrase-making.

Further, on what grounds are my arguments, the substantial correctness of which the Muscovites have been compelled to admit, rejected?

On the grounds that in the interests of the world revolution *we must* accept the loss of Soviet power.

Why should the interests of the world revolution demand it? This is the crux of the matter; this is the very essence of the reasoning of those who would like to defeat my arguments. And it is on this, the most important, fundamental and vital point, that not a word is said, either in the resolution or in the explanatory note. The authors of the resolution found time and space to speak of what is universally known and indisputable—of “ruthlessly suppressing bourgeois counter-revolution in Russia” (using the methods and means of a policy which would lead to the loss of Soviet power?), and of opposing all moderate opportunists in the Party—but of that which is really disputable and which concerns the very essence of the position of the opponents of peace—not a word!

Strange. Extremely strange. Did the authors of the resolution keep silent about this because they felt that on this point they were particularly weak? To have plainly stated *why* (this is demanded by the interests of the world revolution) would most likely have meant exposing themselves....

However that may be, we have to *seek out* the arguments which *may* have guided the authors of the resolution.

Perhaps the authors believe that the interests of the world revolution forbid making any peace at all with imperialists? This opinion was expressed by some of the opponents of peace at one of the Petrograd meetings, but only an insignificant minority of those who objected to a separate peace supported it. It is clear that this opinion would lead to a denial of the expediency of the Brest negotiations and to a rejection of peace, “even” if accompanied by the return of Poland, Latvia and Courland. The incorrectness of this view (which was rejected, for example, by a majority of the Petrograd opponents of peace) is as clear as day. A socialist republic surrounded by imperialist powers could not, from this point of view, conclude any economic treaties and could not exist at all, without flying to the moon.

Perhaps the authors believe that the interests of the world revolution require that it should be *given a push*, and that such a push can be given only by war, never by peace, which might give the people the impression that imperialism was being "legitimised"? Such a "theory" would be completely at variance with Marxism, for Marxism has always been opposed to "pushing" revolutions, which develop with the growing acuteness of the class antagonisms that engender revolutions. Such a theory would be tantamount to the view that armed uprising is a form of struggle which is obligatory always and under all conditions. Actually, however, the interests of the world revolution demand that Soviet power, having overthrown the bourgeoisie in our country, should *help* that revolution, but that it should choose a *form* of help which is commensurate with its own strength. To help the socialist revolution on an international scale by accepting the possibility of defeat of that revolution in *one's own country* is a view that does not follow even from the "pushing" theory.

Perhaps the authors of the resolution believe that revolution has already begun in Germany and has already reached the stage of an open, nation-wide civil war, that we must therefore devote our strength to helping the German workers, and must perish ourselves ("losing Soviet power") to *save* a German revolution which has already started its decisive fight and is being hard pressed? According to this theory, we, while perishing ourselves, would be diverting part of the forces of German counter-revolution, thereby saving the German revolution.

It is quite conceivable that, given these premises, it would not only be "expedient" (as the authors of the resolution put it) but a downright *duty* to accept the possibility of defeat and the possibility of the loss of Soviet power. But obviously these premises do not exist. The German revolution is ripening, but it has obviously not reached the stage of an explosion in Germany, of civil war in Germany. By "accepting the possibility of losing Soviet power", we certainly would not be helping the German revolution to reach maturity, but *would be hindering* it. We would be helping German reaction, playing into its hands, hampering the socialist movement in Germany and frightening away from

socialism large masses of German proletarians and semi-proletarians who have not yet come over to socialism and would be scared by the defeat of Soviet Russia, just as the British workers were scared by the defeat of the Paris Commune in 1871.

Twist and turn them how you will, but you can find no logic in the authors' contentions. There are no sensible arguments to support the view that "in the interests of the world revolution it is expedient to accept the possibility of losing Soviet power".

"Soviet power is now becoming purely formal"—this, as we see, is the monstrous view the authors of the Moscow resolution have come to proclaim.

Since the German imperialists are going to make us pay indemnities and forbid us to carry on propaganda and agitation against Germany, Soviet power loses all significance and "becomes purely formal"—this is probably the line of "reasoning" of the authors of the resolution. We say "probably", for the authors offer nothing clear and specific in support of their thesis.

Profound and hopeless pessimism and complete despair—such is the sum and substance of the "theory" that the significance of Soviet power is purely formal, and that tactics which will risk the possible loss of Soviet power are permissible. Since there is no salvation anyway, then let even Soviet power perish—such is the sentiment that dictated this monstrous resolution. The allegedly "economic" arguments in which such ideas are sometimes clothed reveal the same hopeless pessimism: what sort of Soviet republic is it—the implication is—when not just tribute, but tribute on such a scale can be exacted from it?

Nothing but despair: we shall perish anyhow!

It is a quite understandable mood in the extremely desperate situation in which Russia finds herself. But it is not "understandable" among conscious revolutionaries. The typical thing about it is that here we have the views of the Muscovites reduced to absurdity. The Frenchmen of 1793 would never have said that their gains—the republic and democracy—were becoming purely formal and that they would have to accept the possibility of losing the republic. They were not filled with despair, but with faith

in victory. To call for a revolutionary war, and at the same time to talk in an official resolution of "accepting the possibility of losing Soviet power", is to expose oneself completely.

Early in the nineteenth century, at the time of the Napoleonic wars, Prussia and a number of other countries suffered incomparably and immeasurably greater hardships and burdens of defeat, conquest, humiliation and oppression on the part of the conqueror than Russia is suffering in 1918. Yet the best men of Prussia, when Napoleon's military jackboots trampled upon them a hundred times more heavily than we can be trampled upon now, did not despair, and did not say that their national political institutions were "purely formal". They did not give up, did not succumb to the feeling: "We shall perish anyhow." They signed peace treaties infinitely more drastic, brutal, humiliating and oppressive than the Brest Treaty, and then knew how to bide their time; they staunchly bore the conqueror's yoke, fought again, fell under the conqueror's yoke again, again signed the vilest of vile peace treaties, and again rose, and *in the end liberated themselves* (not without exploiting the dissensions among the stronger competing conquerors).

Why shouldn't this be repeated in our history?

Why should we give way to despair and write resolutions—which, by heavens, are more disgraceful than the most disgraceful peace—saying that "Soviet power is becoming purely formal"?

Why shouldn't the most crushing military defeats in the struggle against the giants of modern imperialism steel the national character in Russia, too, strengthen self-discipline, put an end to the bragging and phrase-making, teach fortitude and bring the people round to the correct tactics of the Prussians when they were crushed by Napoleon—the tactics of signing the most humiliating of peace treaties when you haven't an army, then mustering your forces and rising again and again?

Why should we give way to despair at the first peace treaty, incredibly harsh though it be, when other nations were able staunchly to bear even bitterer misfortunes?

Is it the staunchness of the proletarian who knows that one must submit when strength is lacking, and is then nevertheless able to rise again and again at any price and to build up strength under *all* circumstances, that corresponds to these tactics of despair, or, rather, the spinelessness of the petty bourgeois, who in our country, in the shape of the Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party, has beaten the record for phrase-making about a revolutionary war?

No, dear Moscow "extremist" comrades, every day of trial will drive away from you those very workers who are the most class-conscious and the staunchest. Soviet power, they will say, is not *becoming*, and will not *become*, purely formal; and not only now, when the conqueror is in Pskov and is making us pay a ten-thousand-million-ruble tribute in grain, ore and money, but even if he gets as far as Nizhni-Novgorod and Rostov-on-Don and makes us pay a tribute of twenty thousand million rubles.

Never will any foreign conquest render a popular political institution "purely formal" (and Soviet power is *not* only a political institution, far and away superior to anything known to history). On the contrary, alien conquest will only strengthen popular sympathy for Soviet power, provided—provided it does not indulge in reckless follies.

And to refuse to conclude even the vilest peace when you have no army would be a reckless gamble, for which the people would be justified in condemning the government that refused to do so.

Immensely more harsh and humiliating peace treaties than the Brest Treaty have been signed before in history (we gave some instances above) without discrediting the regime or turning it into a formality; they ruined neither the regime nor the people, but rather steeled the people, *taught* them the stern and difficult science of building up an effective army even in the most desperate conditions and under the heel of the conqueror.

Russia is making for a new and genuine patriotic war, a war for the preservation and consolidation of Soviet power. It is possible that another epoch will—like the epoch of the Napoleonic wars—be an epoch of liberation *wars* (not one war, but wars) imposed by aggressors upon Soviet Russia. That is possible.

And, therefore, more humiliating than any harsh or even extremely harsh peace, rendered imperative owing to the lack of an army—more humiliating than any humiliating peace is humiliating despair. We shall not perish even from a dozen obnoxious peace treaties if we take revolt and war *seriously*. No conquerors can destroy us if we do not destroy ourselves by despair and phrase-making.

Pravda Nos. 37 and 38,
February 28 and March 1, 1918
Signed: *N. Lenin*

Collected Works, Vol. 27,
pp. 68-75

FOURTH (EXTRAORDINARY) ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS OF SOVIETS²³

MARCH 14-16, 1918

1

REPORT ON RATIFICATION OF THE PEACE TREATY MARCH 14

Comrades, today we have to settle a question that marks a turning-point in the development of the Russian revolution, and not only of the Russian but also of the international revolution, and in order to decide correctly on this very harsh peace which representatives of Soviet power have concluded at Brest-Litovsk, and which Soviet power asks you to approve, or ratify—in order to settle this question correctly it is more than ever necessary for us to get an understanding of the historical meaning of the turning-point we are at, an understanding of the main feature of the development of the revolution up to now and the main reason for the severe defeat and the period of stern trials we have passed through.

It seems to me that the chief source of disagreement among the Soviet parties on this question is that some people too easily give way to a feeling of just and legitimate indignation over the defeat of the Soviet Republic by imperialism, too easily give way at times to despair instead of considering the historical conditions of the revolution as they developed up to the time of the present peace, and as they appear to us since the peace; instead of doing that they try to answer questions of the tactics of the revolution on the basis of their immediate feelings. The entire history of revolutions, however, teaches us that

when we have to do with a mass movement or with the class struggle, especially one like that at present developing not only throughout a single country, albeit a tremendous country, but also involving all international relations—in such a case we must base our tactics first and foremost on an appraisal of the objective situation, we must examine analytically the course of the revolution up to this moment and the reason why it has taken a turn so menacing and so sharp, and so much to our disadvantage.

If we examine the development of our revolution from that point of view we see clearly that it has so far passed through a period of relative and largely imaginary self-dependence, and of being temporarily independent of international relations. The path travelled by our revolution from the end of February 1917 to February 11 of this year, when the German offensive began, was, by and large, a path of easy and rapid successes. If we study the development of that revolution on an international scale, from the standpoint of the Russian revolution alone, we shall see that we have passed through three periods in the past year. The first period is that in which the working class of Russia, together with all advanced, class-conscious and active peasants, supported not only by the petty bourgeoisie but also by the big bourgeoisie, swept away the monarchy in a few days. This astounding success is to be explained by the fact that on the one hand, the Russian people had acquired a big reserve of revolutionary fighting potential from the experience of 1905, while on the other hand, Russia, an extremely backward country, had suffered more than any other from the war and had, at an especially early date, reached a stage when it was absolutely impossible to continue the war under the old regime.

This short tempestuous success when a new organisation was created—the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies—was followed by the long months of the period of transition of our revolution, the period in which the government of the bourgeoisie, immediately undermined by the Soviets, was kept going and strengthened by the petty-bourgeois compromising parties, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, who supported it. It was a government that supported the imperialist war and the

imperialist secret treaties, fed the working class on promises, did literally nothing, and preserved the state of economic ruin. The Soviets mustered their forces in this period, a period that for us, for the Russian revolution, was a long one; it was a long period for the Russian revolution but it was a short one from the international point of view, because in most of the leading countries the period of overcoming petty-bourgeois illusions, of compromise by various parties, groups and trends had been taking not months but long decades. The span of time, from April 20²⁴ to the moment Kerensky renewed the imperialist war in June (he had the secret imperialist treaty in his pocket), was decisive. This second period included our July defeat²⁵ and the Kornilov revolt,²⁶ and only through the experience of the mass struggle, only when the working-class and peasant masses had realised from their own experience and not from sermons that petty-bourgeois compromise was all in vain—only then, after long political development, after long preparations and changes in the moods and views of party groups, was the ground made ready for the October Revolution; only then did the Russian revolution enter the third period of its initial stage, a stage of isolation, or temporary separation, from the world revolution.

This third, or October, period, the period of organisation, was the most difficult; at the same time it was a period of the biggest and most rapid triumphs. After October, our revolution—the revolution that placed power in the hands of the revolutionary proletariat, established its dictatorship and obtained for it the support of the vast majority of the proletariat and the poor peasantry—after October our revolution made a victorious, triumphal advance. Throughout Russia civil war began in the form of resistance by the exploiters, the landowners and bourgeoisie, supported by part of the imperialist bourgeoisie.

Civil war broke out, and in that war the forces of the enemies of Soviet power, the forces of the enemies of the working and exploited masses, proved to be insignificant; the civil war was one continuous triumph for Soviet power because its opponents, the exploiters, the landowners and bourgeoisie, had neither political nor economic support,

and their attacks collapsed. The struggle against them was not so much a military operation as agitation; section after section, mass after mass, down to the working Cossacks, abandoned the exploiters who were trying to lead them away from Soviet power.

This period of the victorious, triumphal advance of the dictatorship of the proletariat and Soviet power, when great masses of the working and exploited people of Russia were drawn to the side of Soviet power definitely and irrevocably—this period constituted the final and highest point of development of the Russian revolution, which had been progressing all this time, apparently, independently of world imperialism. That was the reason why a country which was extremely backward and was the most prepared for the revolution by the experience of 1905 was able to promote one class after another to power rapidly, easily and systematically, getting rid of various political alignments until at last that political structure was reached which was the last word, not only in the Russian revolution, but also in the West-European workers' revolutions, for Soviet power has been consolidated in Russia and has won the absolute sympathy of the working and exploited people because it has destroyed the old state apparatus that was an instrument of oppression and has laid the foundation of a state of a new and higher form of which the Paris Commune was the prototype. The Commune destroyed the old state machine and replaced it by the armed force of the masses themselves, replaced bourgeois parliamentary democracy by the democracy of the working people, which excluded the exploiters and systematically suppressed their resistance.

That is what the Russian revolution did in this period and that is why a small vanguard of the Russian revolution is under the impression that this rapid triumphal advance can be expected to continue in further victory. That is precisely their mistake because the period when the Russian revolution was developing, passing state power in Russia from one class to another and getting rid of class compromise within the bounds of Russia alone—this period was able to exist historically only because the predatory giants of world imperialism were temporarily halted in their

advance against Soviet power. A revolution that overthrew the monarchy in a few days, exhausted all possibilities of compromise with the bourgeoisie in a few months and overcame all the resistance by the bourgeoisie in a civil war of a few weeks, this revolution, the revolution of a socialist republic, could live side by side with the imperialist powers, among the international plunderers, the wild beasts of international imperialism, only so long as the bourgeoisie, locked in mortal struggle with each other, were paralysed in their offensive against Russia.

And then began the period that we feel so keenly and see before our eyes, the period of disastrous defeats and severe trials for the Russian revolution, the period in which the swift, direct and open offensive against the enemies of the revolution is over while in its place we are experiencing disastrous defeats and have to retreat before forces that are immeasurably greater than ours, before the forces of international imperialism and finance capital, before the military might that the entire bourgeoisie with its modern weapons and its organisation has mustered against us in the interests of plunder, oppression and the strangling of small nations; we had to think of bringing our forces up to their level; we had to face a task of tremendous difficulty, that of direct combat with enemies that differed from Romanov and Kerensky who could not be taken seriously; we had to meet the forces of the international imperialist bourgeoisie, all its military might, we had to stand face to face with the world plunderers. In view of the delay in getting help from the international socialist proletariat we naturally had to take upon ourselves a conflict with these forces and we suffered a disastrous defeat.

And this epoch is one of disastrous defeats, an epoch of retreat, an epoch in which we must save at least a small part of our position by retreating before imperialism, by awaiting the time when there will be changes in the world situation in general, when the forces of the European proletariat arrive, the forces that exist and are maturing but which have not been able to deal with their enemy as easily as we did with ours; it would be a very great illusion, a very great mistake, to forget that it was easy for the Russian revolution to begin but difficult for it to take further

steps. This was inevitable because we had to begin with the most backward and most rotten political system. The European revolution will have to begin against the bourgeoisie, against a much more serious enemy and under immeasurably more difficult conditions. It will be much more difficult for the European revolution to begin. We see that it is immeasurably more difficult to make the first breach in the system that is holding back the revolution. It will be much easier for the European revolution to advance to the second and third stages. Things cannot be different with the alignment of forces of the revolutionary and reactionary classes that at present obtains in the world. This is the main turn in events that is always overlooked by people who view the present situation, the extremely serious position of the revolution, from the standpoint of their own feelings and their indignation, and not from the historical standpoint. Historical experience teaches us that always, in all revolutions, at a time when a revolution takes an abrupt turn from swift victory to severe defeats, there comes a period of pseudo-revolutionary phrase-making that invariably causes the greatest damage to the development of the revolution. And so, comrades, we shall be able to appraise our tactics correctly only when we set out to consider the turn in events that has hurled us back from swift, easy and complete victories to grave defeats. This is an extremely difficult and extremely serious question arising out of the present turning-point in the development of the revolution, the turn from easy victories within the country to exceptionally heavy defeats without; it is also a turning-point in the entire world revolution, a turn from the period of propaganda and agitation on the part of the Russian revolution, with imperialism biding its time, to the offensive of imperialism against Soviet power, and this turn puts a particularly difficult and acute question before the international movement in Western Europe. If we are not to ignore this historical aspect of the situation we must try to understand how Russia's basic interests in the question of the present harsh, or obscene, as it is called, peace took shape.

When arguing against those who refused to see the need to accept that peace, I have often come up against the

statement that the idea of concluding the peace expresses only the interests of the exhausted peasant masses, the declassed soldiers, and so on and so forth. Whenever I hear such statements, whenever I hear such things referred to, I am always amazed that the class aspect of national development is forgotten by comrades—people who limit themselves exclusively to seeking explanations. As though the Party of the proletariat on taking power had not counted on the alliance of the proletariat and the semi-proletariat, i.e., the poor peasantry (i.e., the majority of the peasantry of Russia), had not known that only such an alliance would be able to hand the government of Russia over to the revolutionary power of the Soviets, the power of the majority, the real majority of the people, and that without this alliance it would be senseless to make any attempt to establish power, especially at difficult turning-points in history! As though we could now abandon this verity that was accepted by all of us and confine ourselves to a contemptuous reference to the exhausted state of the peasantry and the declassed soldiers! With regard to the exhausted state of the peasantry and the declassed soldiers we must say that the country will offer resistance, and that the poor peasants will be able to offer resistance only in so far as those poor peasants are capable of directing their forces to the struggle.

When we were about to take power in October it was obvious that events were inevitably leading up to it, that the turn towards Bolshevism in the Soviets indicated a turn throughout the country, and that the Bolsheviks must inevitably take power. When we, realising this, took power in October, we said to ourselves and to all the people, very clearly and unequivocally, that it was a transfer of power to the proletariat and the poor peasantry, that the proletariat knew the peasantry would support it—you know yourselves in what—in its active struggle for peace and its readiness to continue the fight against big finance capital. In this we are making no mistake, and nobody who sticks to the concept of class forces and class alignments can get away from the indisputable truth that we cannot ask a country of small peasants, a country that has given much for the European and world revolution, to carry on the

struggle in a difficult situation, a most difficult situation, when help from the West-European proletariat has undoubtedly been delayed, although there is no doubt that it is coming to us, as the facts, the strikes, etc., show. That is why I say that such references to the exhaustion of the peasant masses, etc., are made by people who simply have no arguments, who are absolutely helpless when they seek such arguments, and who are quite unable to grasp class relations as a whole, in their entirety, the relations of the revolution of the proletariat and of the peasant masses; it is only when, at every sharp turn in history, we appraise the class relations as a whole, the relations of all classes, and do not select individual examples and individual cases, that we feel ourselves firmly supported by an analysis of probable facts. I realise full well that the Russian bourgeoisie are today urging us on towards a revolutionary war when it is absolutely impossible for us to have such a war. This is essential to the class interests of the bourgeoisie.

When they shout about an obscene peace and do not say a word about who brought the army to its present state, I realise quite well that it is the bourgeoisie together with the *Dyelo Naroda* people, the Tsereteli and Chernov Mensheviks and their yes-men (*applause*)—I know quite well that it is the bourgeoisie who are bawling for a revolutionary war. Their class interests demand it, their anxiety to see Soviet power make a false move demands it. It is not surprising that this comes from people who, on the one hand, fill the pages of their newspapers with counter-revolutionary scribbling.... (*Voices*: "They've all been suppressed!") Unfortunately, not yet all of them, but we will close them all down. (*Applause*.) I should like to see the proletariat that would allow the counter-revolutionaries, those who support the bourgeoisie and collaborate with them, to continue using the monopoly of wealth to drug the people with their bourgeois opium. There is no such proletariat. (*Applause*.)

I realise, of course, that nothing but shouts, howls and screams about an obscene peace comes from those publications. I realise full well that the people who favour this revolutionary war—from the Constitutional-Democrats to

the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries—are those who meet the Germans as they advance and say triumphantly, here come the Germans, and then allow their officers, again wearing their badges of rank, to strut about in the places that have been occupied by the German imperialist invaders. Oh no, I am not a bit surprised at these bourgeois, these collaborators, preaching a revolutionary war. They want Soviet power to be caught in a trap. They have shown their hand, these bourgeois and collaborators. We have seen them and can still see live specimens, we know that in the Ukraine there are Ukrainian Kerenskys, Ukrainian Chernovs and Ukrainian Tseretelis—there they are, the Vinnichenkos. Those gentlemen, the Ukrainian Kerenskys, Chernovs and Tseretelis, concealed from the people the peace they concluded with the German imperialists, and today they are trying to overthrow Soviet power in the Ukraine with the help of German bayonets. That is what those bourgeois and those collaborators and their accomplices have done (*applause*). That is what they have done, those Ukrainian bourgeois and collaborators, whose example you have before your very eyes; they concealed and are still concealing their secret treaties from the people, they are attacking Soviet power with the aid of German bayonets. That is what the Russian bourgeoisie want, that is where the bourgeois yes-men are trying to push Soviet power, wittingly or unwittingly; they know that under no circumstances can Soviet power accept an imperialist war against the might of imperialism at the present moment. That is why it is only in this international situation, in this general class situation, that we can understand the full depth of the mistake of those who, like the Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party, have allowed themselves to be carried away by a theory that is common to the history of all revolutions at moments of difficulty, a theory that is half desperation and half empty phrases; according to this theory, instead of taking a sober view of reality and appraising the tasks of the revolution in respect of the internal and external enemies from the standpoint of class forces, you are asked to settle a serious and very grave problem only under the impact of your feelings, merely from the standpoint of feelings. The peace is incredibly harsh and shameful. In my statements

and speeches I have had occasion to liken it to the Peace of Tilsit that the conqueror Napoleon forced on the Prussian and German peoples after a series of heavy defeats. Yes, the peace is a grave defeat and is humiliating to Soviet power, but if you, proceeding from this, and limiting yourselves to it, appeal to feelings and arouse discontent in an attempt to settle a gigantic historical problem, you will get into that ridiculous and pitiful situation into which the Socialist-Revolutionary Party once got itself (*applause*), when in 1907, in a situation that was somewhat similar in certain respects, that party also appealed to the feelings of revolutionaries, when, after our revolution had suffered heavy defeats in 1906 and 1907, Stolypin presented us with the laws on the Third Duma—shameful and extremely difficult conditions of work in one of the rottenest of representative institutions—when our Party, after brief internal wavering (the wavering on the question was greater than it is today), decided the question in this way: we have no right to give way to feelings; no matter how great our indignation and dissatisfaction with the shameful Third Duma, we have to recognise that it was not chance but the historical necessity of a developing class struggle which lacked the strength to continue but which could muster that strength even in the shameful conditions that have been imposed. We proved to be right. Those who tried to attract people by revolutionary phrases, by appeals to justice (since they were expressing feelings that were trebly legitimate)—those people were given a lesson that will not be forgotten by any revolutionary capable of thought and possessing ideas.

Revolutions do not go smoothly enough to ensure rapid and easy progress. There has never been any great revolution, even on a national scale, that did not experience a hard period of defeat, and the attitude of a revolutionary towards the serious question of mass movements, of developing revolutions, must not be one of declaring the peace obscene and humiliating and then saying he cannot reconcile himself to it; it is not sufficient to quote agitational phrases, to shower reproaches on us because of the peace—that is the known ABC of the revolution, the experience of all revolutions. Our experience since 1905—and if we

are rich in anything, if for some reason or other the Russian working class and poor peasantry have taken upon themselves the most difficult and honourable task of beginning the world socialist revolution, it is because the Russian people have been able, owing to specific historical conditions, to make two great revolutions at the beginning of the twentieth century—we have to learn from the experience of those revolutions, we have to learn to understand that only by studying the changes in the class connections between one country and another is it possible to prove definitely that we are in no condition to accept battle at the moment; we have to take this into consideration and say to ourselves, whatever respite we may obtain, no matter how unstable, no matter how brief, harsh and humiliating the peace may be, it is better than war, because it gives the masses a breathing-space, because it provides us with an opportunity to correct what the bourgeoisie have done, the bourgeoisie that are shouting wherever they have an opportunity to shout, especially under the protection of the Germans in the occupied regions (*applause*).

The bourgeoisie are shouting that the Bolsheviks are responsible for the disintegration of the army, that there is no army and the Bolsheviks are to blame for it; but let us look at the past, comrades, let us look, firstly, at the development of our revolution. Do you not know that desertion and the disintegration of our army began long before the revolution, in 1916, and that everybody who has seen the army will have to admit that? And what did our bourgeoisie do to prevent it? Is it not clear that the only chance for salvation from the imperialists at that time was in their hands, that a chance presented itself in March and April, when Soviet organisations could have taken power by a simple motion of the hand against the bourgeoisie. And if the Soviets had then taken power, if the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois intelligentsia, together with the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, instead of helping Kerensky deceive the people, conceal the secret treaties and lead the army to an offensive—if they had then come to the aid of the army, had supplied it with munitions and rations and had compelled the bourgeoisie to help the fatherland—not the fatherland of the hucksters.

not the fatherland of treaties that help to slaughter the people (*applause*)—and had themselves participated; if the Soviets had forced the bourgeoisie to help the fatherland of the workers and all working people, and had helped the ragged, barefoot and hungry army, then, perhaps, we should have had a period of ten months, long enough to rest the army and gain unanimous support for it, so that without the army having moved one step from the front a general, democratic peace could have been proposed, the secret treaties could have been torn up and the line held without retreating a single step. There would then have been a chance of peace, which the workers and peasants would have willingly supported and approved. That would have been the tactics of the defence of the fatherland, not the fatherland of the Romanovs, Kerenskys, or Chernovs, a fatherland with secret treaties, a fatherland of the treacherous bourgeoisie—not that fatherland but the fatherland of the working people. That is who is responsible for having made the transition from war to revolution and from the Russian revolution to world socialism a period of severe trials. That is why such proposals as a revolutionary war sound like empty phrases, when we know that we have no army, when we know that it would have been impossible to hold the army, and people with a knowledge of the situation could not help seeing that our decree on demobilisation was not an invention but the result of obvious necessity, because it would have been impossible to hold the army. The army could not have been held. That officer, not a Bolshevik, was right who, before the October Revolution, said that the army could not and would not fight.²⁷ This is what has come of months of bargaining with the bourgeoisie and of all the speeches about the need to continue the war; no matter what noble sentiments on the part of many revolutionaries, or of few revolutionaries, may have dictated them, they proved to be empty revolutionary phrases that played into the hands of international imperialism so that it could plunder as much again and more, just as it has been doing since our tactical or diplomatic error, since the time we did not sign the Brest Treaty. When we told those who opposed concluding peace that if we had a respite of any length they would realise that the

recuperation of the army and the interests of the working people were more important than anything else, and that peace should have been concluded for this reason—they maintained that there could be no respite.

But our revolution differs from all previous revolutions in having aroused among the masses a desire to build and create, and the working people in the most out-of-the-way villages, people humiliated, downtrodden and oppressed by tsars, landowners, and bourgeoisie, have been aroused; this period of the revolution is being accomplished only now when the rural revolution is under way, the revolution that is building a new way of life. And for the sake of this respite, no matter how brief and how small it may be, it was our duty to sign the treaty, since we place the interests of the working people above the interests of the bourgeois warriors who rattle their sabres and call on us to fight. That is what the revolution teaches. The revolution teaches that when we make diplomatic mistakes, when we assume that the German workers will come to our aid tomorrow, when we hope that Liebknecht will be victorious immediately (and we know that one way or another Liebknecht will win, that is inevitable in the development of the working-class movement [*applause*]), it means that, when used unthinkingly, the revolutionary slogans of the difficult socialist movement turn into empty phrases. There is not a single representative of the working people, there is not a single honest worker who would refuse to make the greatest sacrifice to help the socialist movement of Germany, because during all this time at the front he has learned to distinguish between the German imperialists and the soldiers tormented by German discipline, most of whom are in sympathy with us. That is why I say that the Russian revolution has corrected our mistake in practice, has corrected it by giving us the respite. It is very probable that it will be an extremely brief one, but we have the chance of at least a brief respite in which the army, worn out and hungry as it is, will become conscious of the fact that it has been given an opportunity to recuperate. It is clear to us that the period of the old imperialist wars is over and we are threatened with the further horrors of an outbreak of fresh wars, but there have been such periods

of war in many historical epochs, and they have always become most fierce towards the end. This must be understood, not only at meetings in Petrograd and Moscow; it must be understood by the many tens of millions in the countryside; and the more enlightened part of the rural population, those returning from the front, those who have experienced the horrors of war, must help them understand it; the huge masses of peasants and workers must become convinced of the necessity for a revolutionary front—they will then say we have acted correctly.

They tell us we have betrayed the Ukraine and Finland—what disgrace! But the situation that has arisen is such that we are cut off from Finland, with whom we concluded an unwritten treaty before the revolution and have now concluded a formal treaty. They say we are surrendering the Ukraine, which Chernov, Kerensky and Tsereteli are going to ruin; they say we are traitors, we have betrayed the Ukraine! I say: Comrades, I've seen enough of the history of revolution not to be embarrassed by the hostile glances and shouts of people who give way to their feelings and are incapable of clear judgement. I will give you a simple example. Suppose that two friends are out walking at night and they are attacked by ten men. If the scoundrels isolate one of them, what is the other to do? He cannot render assistance, and if he runs away is he a traitor?* And suppose that it is not a matter of individuals or of spheres in which questions of direct feelings are being settled, but of five armies, each a hundred-thousand strong, that surround an army of two hundred thousand, and that there is another army that should come to the embattled army's assistance. But if that second army knows that it is certain to fall into a trap, it should withdraw; it must withdraw, even if the retreat has to be covered by the conclusion of an obscene, foul peace—curse as much as you like, but it is necessary to conclude the peace. There is no reason for considering the feelings of a duelist who draws his sword and says that he must die because he is being

* There is probably an error in the stenographic record, which should read: "He cannot but render assistance, and if he runs away is he not a traitor?"

compelled to conclude a humiliating peace. But we all know that, however we may decide, we have no army, and no gestures will save us from the necessity of withdrawing to gain time and enable our army to recuperate; everybody who looks reality in the face and does not deceive himself with revolutionary phrase-making will agree with this. Anyone who faces the facts without blinding himself with phrase-making and arrogance must know this.

If we know this, it is our revolutionary duty to conclude even this harsh, super-harsh and rapacious treaty, for by so doing we shall reach a better position for ourselves and for our allies. Did we actually lose anything by concluding the peace treaty of March 3? Anyone who wants to look at things from the point of view of mass relations, and not from that of the aristocratic duelist, will realise that without an army, or having only the sick remnant of an army, it would be self-deception, it would be the greatest deception of the people, to accept battle and call it a revolutionary war. It is our duty to tell the people the truth; yes, the peace is a harsh one. The Ukraine and Finland are perishing but we must accept this peace and all class-conscious working people in Russia will accept it because they know the unvarnished truth, they know the meaning of war, they know that to stake everything on one card on the assumption that the German revolution will begin immediately is self-deception. By concluding peace we have obtained what we gave our Finnish friends—a respite, help and not destruction.

I know of examples from history of much more rapacious peace treaties having been concluded, treaties that surrendered viable nations to the mercy of the conqueror. Let us compare our peace to the Peace of Tilsit; the Peace of Tilsit was enforced on Prussia and Germany by a conqueror. That peace was so harsh that not only were all the capital cities of all the German states seized, not only were the Prussians thrown back to Tilsit, which would be the same as throwing us back to Omsk or Tomsk; not only that—the worst of all was that Napoleon compelled the conquered peoples to supply him with auxiliary troops for his wars; but nevertheless, when the situation became such that the German peoples had to withstand the attacks

of the conqueror, when the epoch of revolutionary wars in France gave place to the epoch of imperialist wars of conquest, then came the revelation which those people who wax enthusiastic over empty phrases do not want to understand, those people, that is, who picture the conclusion of peace as a downfall. This psychology is understandable in an aristocratic duelist but not in a worker or peasant. The latter has been through the hard school of war and has learned to calculate. There have been even greater trials, and nations even more backward have come through them. Harsher peace treaties have been concluded, the Germans concluded one in an epoch when they had no army, or when their army was sick like ours. They concluded a very harsh peace with Napoleon. But that peace was not the downfall of Germany—on the contrary, it was the turning-point, national defence, renewal. We are on the eve of just such a turning-point and are experiencing analogous conditions. We must look truth in the face and banish all empty phrases and declarations. We must say, peace, if it is necessary, must be concluded. The war of liberation, the class war, the war of the people will take the place of the Napoleonic wars. The system of the Napoleonic wars will change, war will give place to peace and peace to war, and from every harsh peace there has always emerged a more extensive preparation for war. The harshest of peace treaties—the Peace of Tilsit—has gone down in history as a turning-point towards the time when the German people began to swing round; when they retreated to Tilsit, to Russia, they were actually gaining time, waiting for the international situation that had, at one time, favoured Napoleon—he was another plunderer like Hohenzollern or Hindenburg—waiting until the situation changed, until the mentality of the German people, tormented by decades of Napoleonic wars and defeats, had recuperated and the German people were resuscitated. That is what history teaches us, that is why all despair and empty phrases are criminal, that is why everyone will say yes, the old imperialist wars are ending—an historical turning-point has come.

Our revolution has been one long triumph since October, and now the lengthy times of hardship have come, we do

not know for how long, but we do know that it will be a long and difficult period of defeats and retreats, because the alignment of forces is what it is, because by retreating we shall give the people a chance to recuperate. We shall make it possible for every worker and peasant to realise the truth that will enable him to understand that new wars waged by the imperialist plunderers against the oppressed peoples are beginning, and every worker and peasant will realise that we must rise in defence of the fatherland, because we have been defencists since October. Since October 25 we have said openly that we stand for the defence of the fatherland, because we have a fatherland, the one from which we have driven the Kerenskys and Chernovs, because we have torn up the secret treaties, because we have crushed the bourgeoisie—badly so far, but we shall learn to do it better.

Comrades, there is another important difference between the condition of the German people and of the Russian people who have suffered a severe defeat at the hands of the German invaders—there is a tremendous difference that must be mentioned, although I have already touched upon it briefly in the preceding part of my speech. Comrades, when the German people, over a hundred years ago, entered a period of the most cruel wars of conquest, a period when they had to retreat and conclude one shameful treaty after another before they were awakened—at that time the German people were weak and backward, just that and nothing more. They had against them not only the military forces and the might of the conqueror Napoleon, they had against them a country that was far above Germany in the revolutionary and political sense and in every other respect, a country that had risen far above all others, a country that had reached the top. That country was far above the people who were languishing in subjection to the imperialists and landowners. A people that, I repeat, had been nothing but a weak and backward people, managed to learn from its bitter lessons and to raise itself up. We are in a better position; we are not merely a weak and backward people, we are the people who have been able—not because of any special services or of historical predestination, but because of a definite

conjunction of historical circumstances—who have been able to accept the honour of raising the banner of the international socialist revolution. (*Applause.*)

I am well aware, comrades, that the banner is in weak hands, I have said that outright several times already, and the workers of the most backward country will not be able to hold that banner unless the workers of all advanced countries come to their aid. The socialist reforms that we have accomplished are far from perfect, they are weak and insufficient; they will serve as a guide to the advanced West-European workers who will say to themselves, "The Russians haven't made a very good beginning on the job that has to be done"; the important thing is that our people are not merely a weak and backward people as compared with the Germans, they are the people who have raised the banner of revolution. Although the bourgeoisie of any country you like are filling the columns of their press with slander of the Bolsheviks, although the voice of the imperialist press in France, Britain, Germany, etc., curses the Bolsheviks in unison, you will not find a meeting of workers in any country at which the names and slogans of our socialist government give rise to bursts of indignation (*Voice: "That's a lie!"*). No, it is not, it is the truth, and anyone who has been in Germany, Austria, Switzerland or America during the past few months will tell you it is the truth and not a lie, that the names and slogans of representatives of Soviet power in Russia are greeted with the greatest enthusiasm by the workers and that, despite all the lies of the bourgeoisie of Germany, France, etc., the working-class masses have realised that no matter how weak we may be, their cause is being served here in Russia. Yes, our people have a very heavy burden to bear, the burden they have themselves taken up; but a people that has been able to establish Soviet power cannot perish. Again I repeat—there is not a single politically conscious socialist, not a single worker among those who think over the history of the revolution, who can dispute the fact that Soviet power—despite all the defects that I know only too well and fully appreciate—is the highest type of state, the direct successor to the Paris Commune. It has ascended a step higher than the other European revolutions so that

we are not experiencing the difficult conditions that the German people experienced a hundred years ago; the change in the balance of forces among the plunderers, taking advantage of the conflict and satisfying the demands of plunderer Napoleon, plunderer Alexander I and the plundering British monarchy—that was the only thing left, the one chance, for the German people, oppressed by feudalism; and yet the German people did not perish from the Peace of Tilsit. But we, I say again, have better conditions, we have a powerful ally in all West-European countries, the international socialist proletariat, the proletariat that is on our side no matter what our enemies may say. (*Applause.*) True, it is not easy for that ally to raise his voice, any more than it was easy for us until the end of February 1917. That ally is living in the underground, under conditions of the military prison into which all imperialist countries have been turned, but he knows us and understands our cause; it is difficult for him to come to our aid, and Soviet troops, therefore, will need much time and patience and will have to go through many trials before the time comes when he will aid us—we shall use even the slightest chance of procrastination, for time is working on our side. Our cause is gaining strength, the forces of the imperialists are weakening, and no matter what trials and defeats may emerge from the "Tilsit" peace, we are beginning the tactics of withdrawal and, once more I say it, there is no doubt the politically-conscious proletariat and, likewise, the politically-conscious peasants are on our side, and we shall be able not only to make heroic attacks, but also to make a heroic retreat and we shall wait until the international socialist proletariat comes to our aid and shall then begin a second socialist revolution that will be world-wide in its scope. (*Applause.*)

2

**RESOLUTION ON RATIFICATION
OF THE BREST TREATY**

The Congress confirms (ratifies) the peace treaty signed by our representatives at Brest-Litovsk on March 3, 1918.

The Congress recognises as correct the actions of the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars in deciding to conclude the present incredibly harsh, rapacious and humiliating peace in view of our having no army and of the extreme war weariness of the people, who in their distress have received no support from the bourgeoisie and bourgeois intelligentsia, but have seen that distress be made use of for selfish class purposes.

The Congress also recognises the undoubted correctness of the actions of the peace delegation that refused to enter into a detailed discussion on the German peace terms, because those terms were imposed on us in the form of an obvious ultimatum and by undisguised force.

The Congress most insistently urges upon all workers, soldiers and peasants, all the working and oppressed masses, the main, immediate and most pressing task of the moment—the improvement of the discipline and self-discipline of the working people; the creation throughout the country of strong, well-founded organisations that cover, as far as possible, all production and distribution; a ruthless struggle against the chaos, disorganisation and economic ruin which are historically inevitable as the legacy of a most agonising war, but which are, at the same time, the main obstacle to the complete victory of

socialism and the strengthening of the foundations of socialist society.

Today, after the October Revolution, after the overthrow of the political power of the bourgeoisie in Russia, after our denunciation and publication of all secret imperialist treaties, after the cancellation of the foreign loans, after the workers' and peasants' government has proposed a just peace to all peoples without exception, Russia, having escaped from the clutches of the imperialist war, has the right to announce that she is not a participant in the plunder and suppression of other countries.

The Russian Soviet Federative Republic, having unanimously condemned predatory wars, from now on deems it its right and its duty to defend the socialist fatherland against all possible attacks by any of the imperialist powers.

The Congress therefore deems it the unconditional duty of all working people to muster all forces to re-establish and improve the defence potential of our country, to re-establish its military strength on the basis of a socialist militia and the universal military training of all adolescents and adults of both sexes.

The Congress expresses its absolute confidence that Soviet power, which has valiantly fulfilled all the obligations of the international solidarity of the workers of all countries in their struggle for socialism against the yoke of capital, will in future do everything possible to promote the international socialist movement, to secure and shorten the road leading mankind to deliverance from the yoke of capital and from wage slavery, to the creation of a socialist society and to an enduring, just peace between the peoples.

The Congress is firmly convinced that the international workers' revolution is not far away, that the full victory of the socialist proletariat is assured despite the fact that the imperialists of all countries do not hesitate to use the most brutal means for the suppression of the socialist movement.

**"LEFT-WING" CHILDISSHNESS
AND THE PETTY-BOURGEOIS MENTALITY**
(Extract)

I

As a political magnitude, or as a group claiming to play a political role, the "Left Communist" group has presented its "Theses on the Present Situation".²⁸ It is a good Marxist custom to give a coherent and complete exposition of the principles underlying one's views and tactics. And this good Marxist custom has helped to reveal the mistake committed by our "Lefts", because the mere attempt to argue and not to declaim exposes the unsoundness of their argument.

The first thing that strikes one is the abundance of allusions, hints and evasions with regard to the old question of whether it was right to conclude the Brest Treaty. The "Lefts" dare not put the question in a straightforward manner. They flounder about in a comical fashion, pile argument on argument, fish for reasons, plead that "on the one hand" it may be so, but "on the other hand" it may not, their thoughts wander over all and sundry subjects, they try all the time not to see that they are defeating themselves. The "Lefts" are very careful to quote the figures: twelve votes at the Party Congress against peace, twenty-eight votes in favour, but they discreetly refrain from mentioning that of the hundreds of votes cast at the meeting of the Bolshevik group of the Congress of Soviets they obtained less than one-tenth. They have invented a

"theory" that the peace was carried by "the exhausted and declassed elements", while it was opposed by "the workers and peasants of the southern regions, where there was greater vitality in economic life and the supply of bread was more assured".... Can one do anything but laugh at this? There is not a word about the voting at the All-Ukraine Congress of Soviets in favour of peace,²⁹ nor about the social and class character of the typically petty-bourgeois and declassed political conglomeration in Russia who were opposed to peace (the Left Socialist-Revolutionary party). In an utterly childish manner by means of amusing "scientific" explanations, they try to conceal their own bankruptcy, to conceal the facts, the mere review of which would show that it was precisely the declassed, intellectual "cream" of the party, the élite, who opposed the peace with slogans couched in revolutionary petty-bourgeois phrases, that it was precisely the *mass* of workers and exploited peasants who carried the peace.

Nevertheless, in spite of all the above-mentioned declarations and evasions of the "Lefts" on the question of war and peace, the plain and obvious truth manages to come to light. The authors of the theses are compelled to admit that "the conclusion of peace has for the time being weakened the imperialists' attempts to make a deal on a world scale" (this is inaccurately formulated by the "Lefts", but this is not the place to deal with inaccuracies). "The conclusion of peace has already caused the conflict between the imperialist powers to become more acute."

Now this is a fact. Here is something that has *decisive* significance. That is why those who opposed the conclusion of peace were unwittingly playthings in the hands of the imperialists and fell into the trap laid for them by the imperialists. For, until the world socialist revolution breaks out, until it embraces several countries and is strong enough to overcome *international imperialism*, it is the direct duty of the socialists who have been victorious in one country (especially a backward one) *not* to accept battle against the giants of imperialism. Their duty is to try to avoid battle, to wait until the conflicts between the imperialists weaken them *even more*, and bring the

revolution in other countries even nearer. Our "Lefts" did not understand this simple truth in January, February and March. Even now they are afraid of admitting it openly. But it comes to light through all their confused reasoning like "on the one hand it must be confessed, on the other hand one must admit".

"During the coming spring and summer," the "Lefts" write in their theses, "the collapse of the imperialist system must begin. In the event of a victory for German imperialism in the present phase of the war this collapse can only be postponed, but it will then express itself in even more acute forms."

This formulation is even more childishly inaccurate despite its authors' playing at science. It is natural for children to "understand" science to mean something that can determine in what year, spring, summer, autumn or winter the "collapse must begin".

These are ridiculous, vain attempts to ascertain what cannot be ascertained. No serious politician will ever say *when* this or that collapse of a "system" "must begin" (the more so that the collapse of the *system* has already begun, and it is now a question of the moment when the outbreak of revolution in *particular* countries will begin). But an indisputable truth forces its way through this childishly helpless formulation, namely, the outbreaks of revolution in other, more advanced, countries are *nearer* now, a month since the beginning of the "respite" which followed the conclusion of peace, than they were a month or six weeks ago.

What follows?

It follows that the peace supporters were absolutely right, and their stand has been justified by the course of events. They were right in having drummed into the minds of the lovers of ostentation that one must be able to calculate the balance of forces and *not help* the imperialists by making the battle against socialism easier for them, when socialism is still weak, and when the chances of the battle are manifestly *against* socialism.

Our "Left" Communists, however, who are also fond of calling themselves "proletarian" Communists, because there is very little that is proletarian about them and very

much that is petty-bourgeois, are incapable of giving thought to the balance of forces, to calculating it. This is the core of Marxism and Marxist tactics, but they disdainfully brush aside the "core" with "proud" phrases such as:

"...That the masses have become firmly imbued with an inactive 'peace mentality' is an objective fact of the political situation...."

What a gem! After three years of the most agonising and reactionary war, the people, thanks to Soviet power and its correct tactics, which never lapsed into mere phrase-making, have obtained a very, very brief, insecure and far from sufficient respite. The "Left" intellectual striplings, however, with the magnificence of a self-infatuated Narcissus, profoundly declare "that the masses [??] have become firmly imbued [!!!] with an inactive [!!!!?] peace mentality". Was I not right when I said at the Party Congress that the paper or journal of the "Lefts" ought to have been called not *Kommunist* but *Szlachcic*?*

Can a Communist with the slightest understanding of the mentality and the conditions of life of the toiling and exploited people descend to the point of view of the typical declassed petty-bourgeois intellectual with the mental outlook of a noble or *szlachcic*, which declares that a "peace mentality" is "inactive" and believes that the brandishing of a cardboard sword is "activity"? For our "Lefts" merely brandish a cardboard sword when they ignore the universally known fact, of which the war in the Ukraine has served as an additional proof, that peoples utterly exhausted by three years of butchery cannot go on fighting without a respite; and that war, if it cannot be organised on a national scale, very often creates a mentality of disintegration peculiar to petty proprietors, instead of the iron discipline of the proletariat. Every page of *Kommunist*³⁰ shows that our "Lefts" have no idea of iron proletarian discipline and how it is achieved, that they are thoroughly imbued with the mentality of the declassed petty-bourgeois intellectual.

* See *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 105.—Ed.

II

Perhaps all these phrases of the "Lefts" about war can be put down to mere childish exuberance, which, moreover, concerns the past, and therefore has not a shadow of political significance? This is the argument some people put up in defence of our "Lefts". But this is wrong. Anyone aspiring to political leadership must be able to *think out* political problems, and lack of this ability converts the "Lefts" into spineless preachers of a policy of vacillation, which objectively can have only one result, namely, by their vacillation the "Lefts" *are helping* the imperialists to provoke the Russian Soviet Republic into a battle that will obviously be to its disadvantage, they *are helping* the imperialists to draw us into a snare. Listen to this:

"...The Russian workers' revolution cannot 'save itself' by abandoning the path of world revolution, by continually avoiding battle and yielding to the pressure of international capital, by making concessions to 'home capital'.

"From this point of view it is necessary to adopt a determined class international policy which will unite international revolutionary propaganda by word and deed, and to strengthen the organic connection with international socialism (and not with the international bourgeoisie)...."

I shall deal separately with the thrusts at home policy contained in this passage. But examine this riot of phrase-making—and timidity in deeds—in the sphere of foreign policy. What tactics *are binding* at the *present* time on all who do not wish to be tools of imperialist provocation, and who do not wish to walk into the snare? Every politician must give a clear, straightforward reply to this question. Our Party's reply is well known. At the *present* moment we must *retreat* and avoid battle. Our "Lefts" dare not contradict this and shoot into the air: "A determined class international policy"!!

This is deceiving the people. If you want to fight now, say so openly. If you don't wish to *retreat* now, say so openly. Otherwise, in your objective role, you are a tool

of imperialist provocation. And your subjective "mentality" is that of a frenzied petty bourgeois who swaggers and blusters but senses perfectly well that the proletarian is *right* in retreating and in trying to retreat in an organised way. He senses that the proletarian is right in arguing that because we lack strength we must retreat (before Western and Eastern imperialism) even as far as the Urals, for in this lies the *only* chance of playing for time while the revolution in the West matures, the revolution which is not "bound" (despite the twaddle of the "Lefts") to begin in "spring or summer", but which is coming nearer and becoming more probable *every month*.

The "Lefts" have no policy of their "own". They *dare not* declare that retreat at the *present moment* is unnecessary. They twist and turn, play with words, substitute the question of "continuously" avoiding battle for the question of avoiding battle at the *present moment*. They blow soap bubbles such as "international revolutionary propaganda by deed"!! What does this mean?

It can only mean one of two things: either it is mere Nozdryovism, or it means an offensive war to overthrow international imperialism. Such nonsense cannot be uttered openly, and that is why the "Left" Communists are obliged to take refuge from the derision of every politically conscious proletarian behind high-sounding and empty phrases. They hope the inattentive reader will not notice the real meaning of the phrase "international revolutionary propaganda by deed".

The flaunting of high-sounding phrases is characteristic of the declassed petty-bourgeois intellectuals. The organised proletarian Communists will certainly punish this "habit" with nothing less than derision and expulsion from all responsible posts. The people must be told the bitter truth simply, clearly and in a straightforward manner: it is possible, and even probable, that the war party will again get the upper hand in Germany (that is, an offensive against us will commence at once), and that Germany together with Japan, by official agreement or by tacit understanding, will partition and strangle us. Our tactics, if we do not want to listen to the ranters, must be to wait, procrastinate, avoid battle and retreat. If we shake

off the ranters and "brace ourselves" by creating genuinely iron, genuinely proletarian, genuinely communist discipline, we shall have a good chance of gaining many months. And then by retreating even, if the worst comes to the worst, to the Urals, we shall *make it easier* for our ally (the international proletariat) to come to our aid, to "catch up" (to use the language of sport) the distance between the beginning of revolutionary outbreaks and the revolution.

These, and these alone, are the tactics which can in fact strengthen the connection between one temporarily isolated section of international socialism and the other sections. But to tell the truth, all that your arguments lead to, dear "Left Communists", is the "strengthening of the organic connection" between one high-sounding phrase and another. A bad sort of "organic connection", this!

I shall enlighten you, my amiable friends, as to why such disaster overtook you. It is because you devote more effort to learning by heart and committing to memory revolutionary slogans than to thinking them out. This leads you to write "the defence of the socialist fatherland" in quotation marks, which are probably meant to signify your attempts at being ironical, but which really prove that you are muddleheads. You are accustomed to regard "defencism" as something base and despicable; you have learned this and committed it to memory. You have learned this by heart so thoroughly that some of you have begun talking nonsense to the effect that defence of the fatherland in an imperialist *epoch* is impermissible (as a matter of fact, it is impermissible only in an imperialist, reactionary war, waged by the bourgeoisie). But you have not thought out why and when "defencism" is abominable.

To recognise defence of the fatherland means recognising the legitimacy and justice of war. Legitimacy and justice from what point of view? Only from the point of view of the socialist proletariat and its struggle for its emancipation. We do not recognise any other point of view. If war is waged by the exploiting class with the object of strengthening its rule as a class, such a war is a criminal war, and "defencism" in *such* a war is a base betrayal of socialism. If war is waged by the proletariat after

it has defeated the bourgeoisie in its own country, and is waged with the object of strengthening and developing socialism, such a war is legitimate and "holy".

We have been "defencists" since October 25, 1917. I have said this more than once very definitely, and you dare not deny this. It is precisely in the interests of "strengthening the connection" with international socialism that we *are in duty bound* to defend our *socialist* fatherland. Those who treat frivolously the defence of the country in which the proletariat has already achieved victory are the ones who destroy the connection with international socialism. When we were the representatives of an oppressed class we did not adopt a frivolous attitude towards defence of the fatherland in an imperialist war. We opposed such defence on principle. Now that we have become representatives of the ruling class, which has begun to organise socialism, we demand that everybody adopt a *serious* attitude towards defence of the country. And adopting a serious attitude towards defence of the country means thoroughly preparing for it, and strictly calculating the balance of forces. If our forces are obviously small, the best means of defence is *retreat into the interior of the country* (anyone who regards this as an artificial formula, made up to suit the needs of the moment, should read old Clausewitz,³¹ one of the greatest authorities on military matters, concerning the lessons of history to be learned in this connection). The "Left Communists", however, do not give the slightest indication that they understand the significance of the question of the balance of forces.

When we were opposed to defencism on principle we were justified in holding up to ridicule those who wanted to "save" their fatherland, ostensibly in the interests of socialism. When we gained the right to be proletarian defencists the whole question radically changed. It has become our duty to calculate with the utmost accuracy the different forces involved, to weigh with the utmost care the chances of our ally (the international proletariat) being able to come to our aid in time. It is in the interest of capital to destroy its enemy (the revolutionary proletariat) bit by bit, before the workers in all countries have united

(actually united, i.e., by beginning the revolution). It is in our interest to do all that is possible, to take advantage of the slightest opportunity to postpone the decisive battle until the moment (or *until after* the moment) the revolutionary workers' contingents have united in a single great international army.

Published May 9, 10 and 11,
1918 in *Pravda*, Nos. 88, 89
and 90
Signed: *N. Lenin*

Collected Works, Vol. 27,
pp. 325-33

LETTER TO COLONEL ROBINS

To Colonel Robins

May 14. 1918

Dear Mr. Robins:

I enclose the preliminary plan of our economic relations with America.³² This preliminary plan was elaborated in the Council of Export Trade in our highest Council of National Economy.

I hope this preliminary can be useful for you in your conversation with the American Foreign Office and American Export Specialists.

With best thanks,

Yours truly,

(signed) *Lenin*

First published in 1920 in English
in the book *Russian-American
Relations, March 1917-March 1920.
Documents and Papers.* New York,
p. 204

Published according
to the text in
*Russian-American
Relations*

**SPEECH AND GOVERNMENT STATEMENT
AT THE SESSION OF THE ALL-RUSSIA C.E.C.
JULY 15, 1918³³**

Comrades, our Soviet Republic cannot complain of any shortage of political crises and sudden political changes. No matter how simple, how elementary all the imperialist forces may be (and they cannot, of course, feel at ease side by side with the Socialist Soviet Republic), yet in a situation like the one we are passing through at present, with war still continuing on its former scale, the obviously dominant forces, the combination of the two imperialist groups continues to cause political crisis and the like. Concerning one such event, which either resembles or is a real political crisis, I have a communication to make to you.

Yesterday, July 14, at 11 p.m., the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs was visited by the German Charge d'Affaires Doctor Ritzler, who informed him of the contents of a telegram he had just received from Berlin in which the German Government instructs him to request the Russian Government to allow a battalion of German soldiers in uniform to enter Moscow for the purpose of guarding the German Embassy and to allow these soldiers to be dispatched to Moscow at once.

It was further stated in the message that the German Government was far from aiming at any sort of occupation.

The People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, in agreement with the Chairman of the Council of People's Com-

missars, replied that the common people of Russia desire peace, that the Russian Government is prepared to give the German Embassy, Consulate and Commissions an entirely adequate and reliable guard consisting of its own troops, but that it cannot under any circumstances allow a foreign military unit to enter Moscow; it firmly hopes that the German Government, inspired by the same desire for peace, will not insist on its request.

In fact, the request to the Russian Government is in complete contradiction to the statement made by the Imperial Chancellor in the Reichstag that the unfortunate murder of Count Mirbach would not lead to a worsening of relations between the two countries. It also contradicts the wish that we know has been expressed by leading commercial and industrial circles to set up and develop close economic relations to the benefit of both countries; it contradicts the negotiations that have been proceeding successfully. Numerous statements made to our representative in Berlin concerning the political situation and the attitude to Russia also bear witness to this fact.

We still have every reason to hope that a favourable solution to this unexpected incident will be found, but whenever tension arises in our international relations we consider it necessary to make known the facts openly and make the issues clear.

I therefore consider it my duty to make the following Government statement:

"The Government of the Soviet Republic was well aware when it concluded the Brest peace what an onerous task the workers and peasants of Russia had been obliged to undertake owing to the international situation that had developed. The will of the overwhelming majority at the Fourth Congress of Soviets was perfectly clear; the working classes demanded peace because they needed a rest to be able to work, to organise the socialist economy, to recover and build up their strength, which had been undermined by an agonising war.

"In obedience to the will of the Congress the government is carrying out the harsh terms of the Brest Treaty to the letter, and of late our negotiations with the German Government concerning the exact amount of the payments

to be made by us, and the forms of payment, which we have decided to discharge as soon as possible, have made considerable progress.

"But while most scrupulously fulfilling the terms of Brest and upholding the will of the workers and peasants to have peace, the Soviet Government has never lost sight of the fact that there are limits beyond which even the most peace-loving masses of the working people will be compelled to rise, and will rise, as one man to defend their country with arms in hand.

"The senseless and criminal folly of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries has brought us to the brink of war. Our relations with the German Government were bound, despite our will, to become strained. We acknowledge the legitimacy of the German Government's desire to strengthen the guard over its Embassy and we have gone a very long way to meet this desire.

"But when we were informed of the German Government's desire, which is not yet formulated as a categorical demand, that we should allow a battalion of armed German soldiers in uniform access to Moscow, we replied—and we now repeat that reply before the highest body of Soviet government of workers and peasants, before the All-Russia Central Executive Committee—that we could on no account and under no circumstances satisfy such a request, because this would be objectively the beginning of the occupation of Russia by foreign troops.

"To this action we should be obliged to respond as we have responded to the Czechoslovak mutiny³⁴ and to the military operations of the British in the North,³⁵ namely—by expanded mobilisation, by the calling up of all adult workers and peasants for armed resistance, and for the destruction, in the event of a temporarily necessitated withdrawal, of absolutely every road and railway without exception, and also of stores, particularly food stores, so that they do not fall into the hands of the enemy. War would then be for us a fateful but absolute and unconditional necessity, and this would be a revolutionary war waged by the workers and peasants of Russia shoulder to shoulder with the Soviet government till the last breath.

"Like its foreign policy, the home policy of the Soviet

government, in strict adherence to the decisions of the Fifth Congress of Soviets,³⁶ remains unchanged. The criminal folly of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, who have turned out to be henchmen of the whiteguards, the land-owners and the capitalists, will now that the clouds are gathering and the danger of war is increasing be even more criminal in the eyes of the people, and we shall fully and wholeheartedly support and carry out the ruthless punishment of the traitors who have been irrevocably condemned by the will of the Fifth Congress of Soviets. If war, in spite of all our efforts, becomes a fact, we shall be unable to maintain a shadow of trust in the gang of Left Socialist-Revolutionary traitors, who are capable of thwarting the will of the Soviets, resorting to military betrayal and the like. We shall draw fresh strength for war from the merciless suppression both of the madly reckless (Left Socialist-Revolutionary) and the class-conscious (landowner, capitalist and kulak) exponents of counter-revolution.

"To the workers and peasants of all Russia this is our appeal: 'Triple vigilance, caution and endurance, comrades! Everyone must be at his post! Everyone must give his life if necessary to defend Soviet power, to defend the interests of the working people, the exploited, the poor, to defend socialism!'"

Newspaper reports published on
July 16, 1918 in *Pravda* No. 146
and in *Izvestia VTSIK* No. 148

Collected Works, Vol. 27,
pp. 538-41

**Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia
at the Time of Foreign Intervention
and the Civil War**

**SPEECH AT A JOINT SESSION
OF THE ALL-RUSSIA CENTRAL EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE, THE MOSCOW SOVIET, FACTORY
COMMITTEES AND TRADE UNIONS OF MOSCOW**

JULY 29, 1918³⁷

(Applause, which grows into ovation.) Comrades, this is not the first time we have pointed out in the Party press, in Soviet institutions and in our agitation among the people that the period up to the new harvest will be the most difficult, arduous and crucial phase in the socialist revolution that has begun in Russia. Now, I think, we must say that this crucial situation has reached its climax. That is because it has now become perfectly clear once and for all who are the supporters of the imperialist world, of the imperialist countries, and who are the supporters of the Soviet Socialist Republic. It should first be said that from the military standpoint the position of the Soviet Republic has only now become quite clear. Many at first regarded the Czechoslovak revolt as just one of the episodes in the chain of counter-revolutionary revolts. We did not sufficiently appreciate the news in the papers about the participation in this revolt of British and French capital, of the British and French imperialists. We must now recall how events developed in Murmansk, among the Siberian troops and in the Kuban, how the British and French, in alliance with the Czechs, with the closest co-operation of the British bourgeoisie, endeavoured to overthrow the Soviets. All these facts now show that the Czechoslovak movement was one link in the chain long since forged by the systematic policy of the British and French imperialists to throttle Soviet Russia so as to again drag Russia into the ring of imperialist wars. This crisis must now be resolved by the broad mass of the people of Soviet Russia,

for we are today faced not only with a struggle to preserve the Soviet Socialist Republic from the Czech attack, as one particular counter-revolutionary assault, and not even from counter-revolutionary assaults in general, but with a struggle against the onslaught of the whole imperialist world.

I should like first of all to remind you of the fact that the direct participation of the British and French imperialists in the Czechoslovak revolt has long been established; I would remind you of an article printed by *Průkopník Svobody*, the central organ of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, on June 28 and reprinted in our press:³⁸

"On March 7, the Department of the National Council received the first instalment from the French Consul to the amount of three million rubles.

This money was handed to a certain Mr. Šíp, an official of the Department of the National Council.

On March 9, this same Šíp received another two million and on March 25 another million, and on March 26, Mr. Bohumil-Čermák, Vice-President of the National Council, received one million; on April 3, Mr. Šíp received another million.

In all, from March 7 to April 4, the French Consul paid the Department of the National Council 8 million rubles.

No dates are indicated for the following payments: Mr. Šíp one million, Mr. Bohumil-Čermák one million and Mr. Šíp another million.

In addition, a sum of 188,000 rubles was paid to an unknown person. Total: 3,188,000 rubles. Together with the above-mentioned 8 million we get a total of 11,188,000 rubles paid by the French Government to the Department of the National Council.

From the British Consul the Department received £80,000. Thus, from March 7 to the date of action, the leaders of the Czech National Council received about 15 million rubles from the French and British governments, and for this sum the Czechoslovak army was sold to the French and British imperialists."

The majority of you, of course, read this report in the newspapers at the time it was published. We certainly never doubted that the imperialists and financial magnates of Britain and France would do their very utmost to overthrow the Soviet government and place every possible obstacle in its way. But at that time the picture was not yet complete to show that what we are faced with here is a systematic, methodical and evidently long-planned counter-revolutionary military and financial campaign against the Soviet Republic, which all the representatives of British and French imperialism had evidently been

preparing for months. The general trend of events becomes clear now when we review them as a whole, when we compare the Czechoslovak counter-revolutionary movement with the Murmansk landing—where we know the British have disembarked over ten thousand soldiers, and under the pretext of defending Murmansk have actually begun to advance, have occupied Kem and Soroki, have moved to the east of Soroki, and have begun to shoot our Soviet officials—and when we read in the newspapers that many thousands of railwaymen and other workers of the Far North are fleeing from these saviours and liberators, or, to give them their true name, these new imperialist bandits who are rending Russia from another end. And quite recently we received new confirmation of the character of the Anglo-French offensive against Russia.

For geographical considerations alone it is clear that the form of this imperialist offensive against Russia cannot be the same as it was in the case of Germany. There are no common frontiers with Russia, as in the case of Germany; troop strength is less. In her wars of conquest, Britain has been compelled for many decades, owing to the primarily colonial and naval character of her military might, to employ different methods of attack, to attempt chiefly to cut off her victim's supply sources, and to prefer the method of strangulation, under pretext of aid, to open, direct, blunt and outright military force. From information recently received, it is clear that Alexeyev, who has long been notorious among the Russian soldiers and workers and who recently seized the village of Tikhoretskaya, has undoubtedly been utilising the aid of British and French imperialism. There the revolt was more clear-cut, again apparently because British and French imperialism had a hand in it.

Lastly, we received news yesterday that in Baku the British and French imperialists have succeeded in making a very effective move. They have managed to secure a majority of about thirty votes in the Baku Soviet, over our Party, over the Bolsheviks, and those Left Socialist-Revolutionaries—unfortunately, very few in number—who refused to fall in with the despicable gambles and treachery of the Moscow Left Socialist-Revolutionaries,³⁹ and

who have remained loyal to the Soviet government in the struggle against imperialism and war. Over this nucleus in the Baku Soviet which is loyal to the Soviet government and which up to now constituted the majority, the British and French imperialists have now secured a majority of thirty votes, owing to the fact that the greater part of the Dashnachtsutyun Party,⁴⁰ the Armenian quasi-socialists, have sided with them against us. (*Reads the telegram.*)

“On July 26, on the orders of People’s Commissar Korganov, the Adji-Kabul detachment retired from Adji-Kabul to a position near Alyat. After the withdrawal of the Shemakha detachment from Shemakha and Maraza the enemy began to advance along the River Pirsagat valley; the first skirmish with the enemy’s vanguard occurred near the village of Kubala.

Simultaneously from the south, from the direction of the Kura, a large force of cavalry began to advance towards Pirsagat. Under the circumstances, to hold Adji-Kabul we would have had to deploy all our available forces on three sides: to the west of Adji-Kabul, and to the north and south of the Navagi-Pirsagat valley. Such an extension of the front would have left us without reserves and would have made it impossible for us to strike at the enemy as we have no cavalry, and would even have endangered the group at Adji-Kabul if the front had been broken from the north or south. In view of this situation, and in order to conserve the strength of the troops, orders were given to the detachment to retreat from Adji-Kabul to a position near Alyat. The retreat was carried out in good order. Important railway installations and the Adji-Kabul station, as well as the kerosene and oil tanks, have been blown up. In Daghestan, the enemy is on the move as part of the general offensive. On July 24, the enemy advanced in large forces in four directions. After twenty-four hours’ fighting we occupied the enemy’s trenches; the foe dispersed into the woods and nightfall prevented further pursuit. On July 24, news of successes was received from Shura, where fighting is going on around the town; the enemy is putting up a stubborn and organised resistance, and is commanded by former Daghestan officers. Daghestan peasants are taking an active part in the fighting around Shura.

The Right-wing parties in Baku have raised their heads and are vigorously campaigning to call in the British. This campaign is strongly backed by the army officers and is being conducted among the forces at the front. Anglophil agitation has disorganised the army. The British orientation has recently been making great headway among the worn-out and despairing people.

Under the influence of the unscrupulous and provocative activities of the Right-wing parties, the Caspian flotilla has adopted several contradictory resolutions in regard to the British. Deceived by British hirelings and volunteer agents, until quite recently it blindly believed in the sincerity of British support.

Latest reports say that the British are advancing in Persia and have occupied Resht (Giljan), where for four days they have been engaged against Kuchuk-Khan and the German and Turkish bands, who have joined forces with him, headed by Mussavatists who had fled from Baku. After the Resht battle the British applied to us for assistance, but our representatives in Persia refused. The British got the upper hand in Resht. But they have practically no forces in Persia. We know they have only fifty men in Enzeli. They need petrol, in exchange for which they are offering us cars. Without petrol they are stuck.

On July 25, a second session of the Soviet was held to discuss the political and military situation, and at the insistence of the Right-wing parties the question of the British was raised. Comrade Shahumyan, Commissar Extraordinary for the Caucasus, citing the resolution of the Fifth Congress of Soviets and Stalin's telegram on behalf of the Central Council of People's Commissars, spoke against inviting the British and demanded that this question be struck from the agenda. Comrade Shahumyan's move was defeated by a small majority, whereupon, as representative of the central government, he entered a vigorous protest. The session heard the report of the delegates who had visited the front. By 259 votes of the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, Right Dashnaks and Mensheviks against 236 votes of the Bolsheviks, Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and Left Dashnaks, a resolution was adopted to invite the British and form a government comprising members of all parties represented in the Soviet and recognising the power of the Council of People's Commissars. The resolution was sharply condemned by the Left wing. Shahumyan declared that he regarded it as a shameful betrayal and stark ingratitude towards the workers and peasants of Russia and that as the central government's representative, he renounced all responsibility for the decision. A statement was made on behalf of the group of the Bolsheviks, Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and Left Dashnaks to the effect that they would not join the coalition government and that the Council of People's Commissars would resign. Comrade Shahumyan declared in the name of the three Left groups that a government which had in fact broken with the Russian Soviet government by inviting the British imperialists would receive no support from Soviet Russia. By its treacherous policy of inviting the British, the local Soviet had lost Russia and the parties supporting the Soviet government.

The Right-wing parties were thrown into utter confusion at the decision of the Council of People's Commissars to resign. When news of this situation got around there was an abrupt change of sentiment in the districts and at the front. The sailors realised they had been duped by traitors who want to break with Russia and bring down the Soviet government. The people are having second thoughts about the British. Yesterday, an urgent meeting of the Executive Committee was held over the resignation of the Council of People's Commissars. It was decided that all the People's Commissars should remain at their posts and continue their former functions pending decision of the question of power at the Soviet's session on July 31. The Executive Committee has decided to take urgent measures to combat

the threatening counter-revolution. The foe is carrying on activities under the wing of the Anglo-French parties.

Press Bureau of the Baku Council of People's Commissars."

Not unlike the groups here who call themselves socialists but have never broken off relations with the bourgeoisie, there, too, these people came out in favour of inviting the British troops to defend Baku.⁴¹ We already know only too well the meaning of such an invitation to imperialist troops to defend the Soviet Republic. We know the meaning of this invitation extended by the bourgeoisie, a section of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, and by the Mensheviks. We know the meaning of this invitation extended by the Menshevik leaders in Tiflis, Georgia.

We may now say that the Bolshevik, the Communist Party is the only party which has never invited imperialists and has never entered into a rapacious alliance with them, but has only retreated before these cutthroats when they pressed too hard. (*Applause.*) We know our Communist comrades in the Caucasus were in a very difficult position because the Mensheviks betrayed them everywhere by entering into direct alliance with the German imperialists, on the pretext, of course, of defending Georgia's independence.

You are all aware that this independence of Georgia has become a sheer fraud. In actual fact it amounts to the occupation and complete seizure of Georgia by the German imperialists, an alliance of German bayonets with the Menshevik government against the Bolshevik workers and peasants. And, therefore, our Baku comrades were a thousand times right in refusing to close their eyes to the danger of the situation and saying: We would never be opposed to peace with an imperialist power on the basis of ceding part of our territory, provided this did not harm us, did not bind our troops in an alliance with the bayonets of the aggressors and did not prevent us from carrying on our socialist reconstruction.

But since, as the question now stands, by inviting the British, supposedly for the defence of Baku, they are inviting a power which has now swallowed up the whole of Persia and which has long been moving up its forces

for seizing the Southern Caucasus—that is, surrendering themselves to British and French imperialism—we cannot doubt or hesitate for a moment and must say that, however difficult the position of our Baku comrades may be, by refusing to conclude such a peace they have taken the only step worthy of true socialists. The resolute rejection of any agreement whatsoever with the British and French imperialists was the only true course for our Baku comrades to take, for you cannot invite them without converting your independent socialist government, even though on severed territory, into a slave of imperialist war.

We therefore do not entertain the slightest doubt as to the significance of the Baku events in the general scheme of things. Yesterday, news was received that counter-revolutionary revolts have broken out in a number of towns in Central Asia with the obvious complicity of the British entrenched in India, who, having brought Afghanistan completely under their sway, long ago created a base for extending their colonial possessions, strangling nations, and attacking Soviet Russia. And now, when these separate links have become quite clear to us, the present military and general strategic position of our Republic has been fully revealed. Murmansk in the North, the Czechoslovak front in the East, Turkestan, Baku and Astrakhan in the South-East—we see that practically all the links in the chain forged by British and French imperialism have been joined.

We now clearly see that the landowners, the capitalists and the kulaks, all of whom, of course, for perfectly natural reasons have a burning hatred for the Soviet government, are acting here, too, in ways greatly resembling those of the landowners, capitalists and kulaks in the Ukraine and in other regions severed from Russia. As the lackeys of British and French imperialism, they have done their utmost to undermine the Soviet government at all costs. Realising they could not do it with forces inside Russia alone, they decided to act not by words or appeals in the spirit of the Martov gentry, but by resorting to more effective methods of struggle—military hostilities. That is where our attention should be chiefly directed; that is

where we should concentrate all our agitation and propaganda; and we should shift the centre of the whole of our Soviet work accordingly.

The fundamental fact is that it is the imperialist forces of the other coalition that are now at work, not the German, but the Anglo-French, which have seized part of our territory and are using it as a base. Up to now their geographical position has prevented them from attacking Russia by the direct route; now British and French imperialism, which for four years has been drenching the whole world in blood in a bid for world supremacy, has by an indirect route approached within easy reach of Russia, with the object of strangling the Soviet Republic and once more plunging Russia into imperialist war. You are all perfectly aware, comrades, that from the very beginning of the October Revolution our chief aim has been to put a stop to the imperialist war; but we never harboured the illusion that the forces of the proletariat and the revolutionary people of any one country, however heroic and however organised and disciplined they might be, could overthrow international imperialism. That can be done only by joint efforts of the workers of the world.

What we have done, however, is to sever all connections with the capitalists of the whole world in one country. Our government is not tied by a single thread to any kind of imperialists and never will be, whatever future course our revolution may take. The revolutionary movement against imperialism during the eight months of our rule has made tremendous strides, and in one of the chief centres of imperialism, Germany, matters in January 1918 came to an armed clash and the bloody suppression of that movement. We have done our revolutionary duty as no revolutionary government in any country has ever done on an international, world-wide scale. But we never deceived ourselves into thinking this could be done by the efforts of one country alone. We knew that our efforts were inevitably leading to a world-wide revolution, and that the war begun by the imperialist governments could not be stopped by the efforts of those governments themselves. It can be stopped only by the efforts of all workers; and when we came to power, our task as the proletarian Communist

Party, at a time when capitalist bourgeois rule still remained in the other countries—our immediate task, I repeat, was to retain that power, that torch of socialism, so that it might scatter as many sparks as possible to add to the growing flames of socialist revolution.

This was everywhere an extremely difficult task; and what enabled us to accomplish it was the fact that the proletariat rallied to the defence of the gains of the Socialist Republic. This task has led to a particularly arduous and critical situation, for the socialist revolution, in the direct sense of the term, has not yet begun in any country, although it is more imminent in countries like Italy and Austria. But as it has not yet begun, we are faced with a new success of British and French, and therefore world, imperialism. Whereas from the West, German imperialism continues to stand as a military, annexatory, imperialist force, from the North-East and South of Russia, British and French imperialism has been able to dig itself in and is making it patently obvious to us that this force is prepared once more to plunge Russia into imperialist war, is prepared to crush Russia, the independent socialist state that is continuing its socialist work and propaganda on a scale hitherto unparalleled anywhere in the world. Against this, British and French imperialism has won a big victory, and, surrounding us on all sides, it is doing its utmost to crush Soviet Russia. We are fully aware that British and French imperialism's victory is inseparably connected with the class struggle.

We have always said—and revolutions bear it out—that when the foundations of the exploiters' economic power are at stake, their property, which places the labour of tens of millions of workers and peasants at their disposal and enables the landowners and capitalists to enrich themselves, when, I repeat, the private property of the capitalists and landowners is at stake, they forget all talk about love for one's country and independence. We know full well that the Cadets,⁴² the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks have beaten the record in concluding alliances with the imperialist powers, in concluding predatory treaties and betraying the country to Anglo-French imperialism. The Ukraine and Tiflis are good examples. The alliance of

the Mensheviks and Right Socialist-Revolutionaries with the Czechs is sufficient proof of this. And the action of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, when they tried to embroil the Russian Republic in war in the interests of the Yaroslavl whiteguards, shows quite clearly that when their class profits are at stake, the bourgeoisie will sell their country and strike a bargain with any foreigner against their own people. This truth has time and again been borne out by the history of the Russian revolution, after the history of revolution over a hundred years had shown that that is the law of the class interests, of the class policy of the bourgeoisie, at all times and in all countries. It is therefore by no means surprising that the present aggravation of the Soviet Republic's international position is connected with the aggravation of the class struggle at home.

We have often said that, in this respect, in regard to the aggravation of the food crisis, the period until the new harvest will be the most difficult. Russia is being flayed with the scourge of famine, which has attained unparalleled proportions precisely because it is the plan of the imperialist robbers to cut off her granaries. Their calculations are well founded and are aimed at getting social and class support in the grain-producing outlying regions; they seek areas where the kulaks predominate—the rich peasants, who have battened on the war and who live by the labour of others, the labour of the poor. You know that these people have piled up hundreds of thousands of rubles and that they have huge stocks of grain. You know that it is these people who have battened on national misfortunes and who had the greater opportunity to rob and increase their profits the more the population of the capital suffered—it is these kulaks who have constituted the chief and most formidable buttress of the counter-revolutionary movement in Russia. Here the class struggle has reached its deepest source. There is not a village left where the class struggle is not raging between a miserable handful of kulaks on the one hand and the vast labouring majority—the poor and those middle peasants who have no grain surpluses, who have consumed them long ago, and who did not go in for profiteering—on the other. This class struggle has penetrated every village.

When we were determining our political plans and publishing our decrees—the vast majority of those present here are, of course, familiar with them—when, I repeat, we drafted and passed the decrees on the organisation of the poor peasants,⁴³ it was clear to us we were coming up against the most decisive and fundamental issue of the whole revolution, the most decisive and fundamental issue, the issue of power—whether power would remain in the hands of the workers; whether they could gain the support of all the poor peasants, with whom they have no differences; whether they would succeed in winning over the peasants with whom they have no disagreement, and unite this whole mass, which is dispersed, disunited and scattered through the villages—in which respect it lags behind the urban workers; whether they could unite them against the other camp, the camp of the landowners, the imperialists and kulaks.

Before our very eyes the poor peasants have begun to rally together very quickly. It is said that revolution teaches. The class struggle does indeed teach in practice that any false note in the position of any party immediately lands that party where it deserves to be. We have clearly seen the policy of the Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party, who, because of their spinelessness and stupidity, started to vacillate at a time when the food problem was at its height, and that party disappeared from the scene as a party and became a pawn in the hands of the Yaroslavl whiteguards. (*Applause.*)

Comrades, the wave of revolts sweeping Russia is easy to understand in the light of this sharpening of the class struggle over the food crisis at the very time when we know the new harvest is a bumper one but cannot yet be gathered, and when the hunger-tormented people of Petrograd and Moscow are being driven to revolt by the kulaks and the bourgeoisie, who are making the most desperate efforts, crying "Now or never!" There is the revolt in Yaroslavl.⁴⁴ And we can see the influence of the British and French; we see the calculations of the counter-revolutionary landowners and bourgeoisie. Wherever the question of grain arose, they obstructed the grain monopoly, without which there can be no socialism. That is just where the bourgeois

sie are bound to unite; here the bourgeoisie have a stronger backing than the country yokel. The decisive fight between the forces of socialism and bourgeois society is bound to come in any case, whatever happens, if not today, then tomorrow, on one issue or another. Only pseudo-socialists, like our Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, for example, can waver. When socialists waver over this question, over this fundamental question, it means they are only pseudo-socialists, and are not worth a brass farthing. The effect of the revolution has virtually been to turn such socialists into mere pawns in the hands of the French generals, pawns whose role was demonstrated by the former Central Committee of the former Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party.

Comrades, the result of these combined efforts of the counter-revolutionary Russian bourgeoisie and the British and French imperialists has been that the Civil War in our country is now coming from a quarter which not all of us anticipated and from which not all of us clearly realised it might come, and it has merged with the war from without into one indivisible whole. The kulak revolt, the Czechoslovak mutiny and the Murmansk movement are all part of one and the same war that is bearing down on Russia. We escaped from war in one quarter by incurring tremendous losses, by signing an incredibly harsh peace treaty; we knew we were concluding a predatory peace, but we said we would be able to continue our propaganda and our constructive work, and in that way cause the imperialist world's disintegration. We have succeeded in doing so. Germany is now negotiating with us as to how many thousand millions to extort from Russia on the basis of the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty, but she has recognised all the acts of nationalisation we proclaimed under the decree of June 28.⁴⁵ She has not raised the question of private ownership of land in the Republic; this point must be stressed as a counter-blast to the fantastic lies spread by Spiridonova and similar leaders of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, lies that have brought grist to the mill of the landowners and are now being repeated by the most ignorant and backward Black-Hundred elements. These lies must be nailed.

The fact of the matter is that, burdensome as the peace treaty may be, we have won freedom to carry on socialist

construction at home, and have taken steps in this direction which are now becoming known in Western Europe and constitute elements of propaganda that are incomparably more effective than any before.

So, having got out of war in one quarter, with one coalition, we have been at once subjected to an imperialist assault from another quarter. Imperialism is a world-wide phenomenon; it is a struggle for the division of the whole world, of the whole earth, for the domination of one or another group of robbers. Now another group of vultures, the Anglo-French, are hurling themselves at our throats and threatening to drag us into war again. Their war is merging with the Civil War into one continuous whole, and that is the chief source of our difficulties at present, when the question of war, of military events, has again come to the fore as the cardinal and fundamental question of the revolution. There lies the whole difficulty, for the people are tired of war, exhausted by it as never before. The Russian people's state of extreme war fatigue and exhaustion is rather like that of a man who has been thrashed within an inch of his life, and who cannot be expected to show any energy of working capacity. And in the same way this nearly four years' war, overwhelming a country which had been despoiled, tormented, and defiled by tsarism, by the autocracy, the bourgeoisie and Kerensky, has for many reasons naturally aroused a feeling of abhorrence in the Russian people, and is one of the chief sources of the tremendous difficulties we are now experiencing.

Yet, such a turn of events definitely made for war. We have again been plunged into war, we are in a state of war; and it is not only civil war, war against the kulaks, the landowners and the capitalists who have united against us—now we are faced with British and French imperialism. The imperialists are still not in a position to throw their armies against Russia—they are prevented by geographical conditions; but they are devoting all they can, all their millions, all their diplomatic connections and forces, to aid our enemies. We are in a state of war, and we can emerge triumphant. But here we come up against a formidable enemy, one of the most difficult to cope with—war-weariness, hatred and abhorrence of war; and

this must be overcome, otherwise we shall not be able to tackle this problem—the problem of war—which does not depend on our will. Our country has again been plunged into war, and the outcome of the revolution will now entirely depend on who is the victor. The principal protagonists are the Czechs, but the real directors, the real motive and actuating power are the British and French imperialists. The whole question of the existence of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic, the whole question of the Russian socialist revolution has been reduced to a question of war. There lie tremendous difficulties, considering the state in which the people have emerged from the imperialist war. Our task is now perfectly clear. Any deceit would be tremendously harmful; we consider it a crime to conceal this bitter truth from the workers and peasants. On the contrary, let the truth be brought home to them all as clearly and graphically as possible.

Yes, there have been cases when our troops displayed criminal weakness, as, for example, during the capture of Simbirsk by the Czechs, when our forces retreated. We know the troops are tired of war and loathe it; but it is also natural and inevitable that until imperialism is defeated internationally, it would attempt to drag Russia into imperialist war, endeavour to make a shambles of her. Whether we like it or not, the question stands as follows: we are in a war, and on the outcome of that war hangs the fate of the revolution. That should be the first and last word in our propaganda work, in all our political, revolutionary, and construction activities. We have done very much in a short time, but the job is not yet over. All our activities must be entirely and completely geared to this question, on which the fate and outcome of the revolution, the fate of the Russian and world revolution now depends. Of course, world imperialism cannot get out of the present war without a number of revolutions; this war cannot end otherwise than by the ultimate victory of socialism. But our task now is to maintain, protect and uphold this force of socialism, this torch of socialism, this source of socialism which is so actively influencing the whole world. And as matters now stand, this task is a military task.

This is not the first time we have been in such a situation, and many of us have said that however severe the price we had to pay for peace, however grave the sacrifices it demanded of us, however much the enemy was striving to rob us of more and more territory, Russia so far, in the face of great odds, was enjoying peace and in a position to consolidate her socialist gains. We have even gone farther in this direction than many of us expected. For example, our workers' control⁴⁶ has advanced a long way from its early forms, and today we are about to witness the conversion of the state administration into a socialist system. We have made great strides in our practical affairs. We now have the workers completely running industry. But circumstances have prevented us from continuing that work in peace; they have once again plunged us into war, and we must strain every nerve and summon everyone to arms. It would be a disgrace for any Communist to be in two minds over this.

Vacillation among the peasants does not surprise us. The peasants have not been through the same school of life as the workers, who have been accustomed for decades to look upon the capitalist as their class enemy, and who have learned to unite their forces to combat him. We know the peasants have not been through such a university. At one time they sided with the workers but today we are witnessing a period of vacillation, when the peasants are splitting up. We know any number of instances of kulaks selling grain to the peasants below the fixed prices in order to create the impression that they, the kulaks, are defending the peasants' interests. None of this surprises us. But the Communist worker will not waver, the working class will stand firm; and if a kulak spirit prevails among the peasants, it is quite understandable. Where the Czechs rule and the Bolsheviks no longer are, we have the following picture: at first the Czechs are hailed practically as deliverers; but after a few weeks of this bourgeois rule, a tremendous movement against the Czechs and in favour of the Soviet government arises, because the peasants begin to realise that all talk about freedom of trade and a Constituent Assembly means only one thing—the rule of the landowners and capitalists.

Our job is to get the workers to rally and to create an organisation under which within the next few weeks everything will be devoted to solving the war issue. We are now at war with British and French imperialism and with everything bourgeois and capitalist in Russia, with everyone endeavouring to frustrate the socialist revolution and embroil us in war. The situation is one where all the gains of the workers and peasants are at stake. We may be confident that we shall have the broad sympathy and support of the proletariat, and then the danger will be completely averted, and new ranks of the proletariat will come forward to stand up for their class and save the socialist revolution. As matters now stand, the struggle is being fought over two major issues, and all the main party differences have been obliterated in the fires of revolution. The Left Socialist-Revolutionary who keeps insistently reminding us that he is on the left, concealing himself behind a cloud of revolutionary phrases, while actually revolting against the Soviet government, is just the same a hireling of the Yaroslavl whiteguards. That is what he is in history and the revolutionary struggle! Today only two classes confront each other in the battle arena: the class struggle is between the proletariat, which is protecting the interests of the working people, and those protecting the interests of the landowners and capitalists. All talk about a Constituent Assembly, about an independent state and so on, which is being used to dupe the ignorant masses, has been exposed by the experience of the Czechoslovak and Caucasian Menshevik movements. Behind all this talk stand the same forces—the landowners and capitalists; and the Czech mutiny brings in its train the rule of the landowners and capitalists, just as the German occupation does. That is what the war is about!

Comrades, the workers must close their ranks more firmly than ever and set an example of organisation and discipline in this struggle. Russia is still the only country which has severed all ties with the imperialists. True, we are bleeding from grave wounds. We have retreated in the face of the imperialist brute, playing for time, striking a blow at it here and there. But, as the Socialist Soviet Republic, we have remained independent. Performing our socialist work,

we opposed the imperialism of the whole world; and this struggle is becoming clearer and clearer to the workers of the world, and their mounting indignation is bringing them nearer and nearer to the future revolution. It is over this that the struggle is being waged, because our Republic is the only country in the world not to march hand in hand with imperialism and not to allow millions of people to be slaughtered to decide whether the French or the Germans will rule the world. Our Republic is the only country to have broken away by force, by revolutionary means, from the world imperialist war, and to have raised the banner of socialist revolution. But it is being dragged back into the imperialist war, and being forced into the trenches. Let the Czechs fight the Germans, let the Russian bourgeoisie make their choice, let Milyukov decide, perhaps even in concurrence with Spiridonova and Kamkov, which imperialists to side with. But we declare we must be prepared to lay down our lives to prevent them deciding this question, for the salvation of the whole socialist revolution is at stake. (*Applause.*) I know there is a change of spirit among the peasants of the Saratov, Samara, and Simbirsk gubernias, where fatigue was most marked and fitness for military action was lowest of all. After experiencing the ravages of the Cossacks and Czechs, and having a real taste of what the Constituent Assembly and the cries "Down with the Brest Peace Treaty!" mean, they have realised that all this only leads to the return of the landowner, to the capitalist mounting the throne—and they are now becoming the most ardent champions of Soviet power. I have not the slightest doubt that the Petrograd and Moscow workers, who are marching at the head of the revolution, will understand the situation, will understand the gravity of the times and will act with greater determination than ever, and that the proletariat will smash both the Anglo-French and the Czech offensive in the interests of the socialist revolution. (*Applause.*)

LETTER TO AMERICAN WORKERS⁴⁷

Comrades! A Russian Bolshevik who took part in the 1905 Revolution, and who lived in your country for many years afterwards, has offered to convey my letter to you. I have accepted his proposal all the more gladly because just at the present time the American revolutionary workers have to play an exceptionally important role as uncompromising enemies of American imperialism—the freshest, strongest and latest in joining in the world-wide slaughter of nations for the division of capitalist profits. At this very moment, the American multimillionaires, these modern slaveowners, have turned an exceptionally tragic page in the bloody history of bloody imperialism by giving their approval—whether direct or indirect, open or hypocritically concealed, makes no difference—to the armed expedition launched by the brutal Anglo-Japanese imperialists for the purpose of throttling the first socialist republic.

The history of modern, civilised America opened with one of those great, really liberating, really revolutionary wars of which there have been so few compared to the vast number of wars of conquest which, like the present imperialist war, were caused by squabbles among kings, landowners or capitalists over the division of usurped lands or ill-gotten gains. That was the war the American people waged against the British robbers who oppressed America and held her in colonial slavery, in the same way as these "civilised" blood-suckers are still oppressing and holding in colonial slavery hundreds of millions of people in India, Egypt, and all parts of the world.

About 150 years have passed since then. Bourgeois civilisation has borne all its luxurious fruits. America has taken first place among the free and educated nations in level of development of the productive forces of collective human endeavour, in the utilisation of machinery and of all the wonders of modern engineering. At the same time, America has become one of the foremost countries in regard to the depth of the abyss which lies between the handful of arrogant multimillionaires who wallow in filth and luxury, and the millions of working people who constantly live on the verge of pauperism. The American people, who set the world an example in waging a revolutionary war against feudal slavery, now find themselves in the latest, capitalist stage of wage-slavery to a handful of multimillionaires, and find themselves playing the role of hired thugs who, for the benefit of wealthy scoundrels, throttled the Philippines in 1898 on the pretext of "liberating" them, and are throttling the Russian Socialist Republic in 1918 on the pretext of "protecting" it from the Germans.

The four years of the imperialist slaughter of nations, however, have not passed in vain. The deception of the people by the scoundrels of both robber groups, the British and the German, has been utterly exposed by indisputable and obvious facts. The results of the four years of war have revealed the general law of capitalism as applied to war between robbers for the division of spoils: the richest and strongest profited and grabbed most, while the weakest were utterly robbed, tormented, crushed and strangled.

The British imperialist robbers were the strongest in number of "colonial slaves". The British capitalists have not lost an inch of "their" territory (i.e., territory they have grabbed over the centuries), but they have grabbed all the German colonies in Africa, they have grabbed Mesopotamia and Palestine, they have throttled Greece, and have begun to plunder Russia.

The German imperialist robbers were the strongest in organisation and discipline of "their" armies, but weaker in regard to colonies. They have lost all their colonies, but plundered half of Europe and throttled the largest number of small countries and weak nations. What a great war of "liberation" on both sides! How well the robbers of both

groups, the Anglo-French and the German capitalists, together with their lackeys, the social-chauvinists, i.e., the socialists who went over to the side of "*their own*" bourgeoisie, have "defended their country"!

The American multimillionaires were, perhaps, richest of all, and geographically the most secure. They have profited more than all the rest. They have converted all, even the richest, countries into their tributaries. They have grabbed hundreds of billions of dollars. And every dollar is sullied with filth: the filth of the secret treaties between Britain and her "allies", between Germany and her vassals, treaties for the division of the spoils, treaties of mutual "aid" for oppressing the workers and persecuting the internationalist socialists. Every dollar is sullied with the filth of "profitable" war contracts, which in every country made the rich richer and the poor poorer. And every dollar is stained with blood—from that ocean of blood that has been shed by the ten million killed and twenty million maimed in the great, noble, liberating and holy war to decide whether the British or the German robbers are to get most of the spoils, whether the British or the German thugs are to be *foremost* in throttling the weak nations all over the world.

While the German robbers broke all records in war atrocities, the British have broken all records not only in the number of colonies they have grabbed, but also in the subtlety of their disgusting hypocrisy. This very day, the Anglo-French and American bourgeois newspapers are spreading, in millions and millions of copies, lies and slander about Russia, and are hypocritically justifying their predatory expedition against her on the plea that they want to "protect" Russia from the Germans!

It does not require many words to refute this despicable and hideous lie; it is sufficient to point to one well-known fact. In October 1917, after the Russian workers had overthrown their imperialist government, the Soviet government, the government of the revolutionary workers and peasants, openly proposed a just peace, a peace without annexations or indemnities, a peace that fully guaranteed equal rights to all nations—and it proposed such a peace to *all* the belligerent countries.

It was the Anglo-French and the American bourgeoisie who refused to accept our proposal; it was they who even refused to talk to us about a general peace! It was *they* who betrayed the interests of all nations; it was they who prolonged the imperialist slaughter!

It was they who, banking on the possibility of dragging Russia back into the imperialist war, refused to take part in the peace negotiations and thereby gave a free hand to the no less predatory German capitalists who imposed the annexationist and harsh Brest Peace upon Russia!

It is difficult to imagine anything more disgusting than the hypocrisy with which the Anglo-French and American bourgeoisie are now "blaming" us *for* the Brest Peace Treaty. The very capitalists of those countries which could have turned the Brest negotiations into general negotiations for a general peace are now our "accusers"! The Anglo-French imperialist vultures, who have profited from the plunder of colonies and the slaughter of nations, have prolonged the war for nearly a whole year after Brest, and yet they "accuse" *us*, the Bolsheviks, who proposed a just peace to all countries, they accuse *us*, who tore up, published and exposed to public disgrace the secret, criminal treaties concluded between the ex-tsar and the Anglo-French capitalists.

The workers of the whole world, no matter in what country they live, greet us, sympathise with us, applaud us for breaking the iron ring of imperialist ties, of sordid imperialist treaties, of imperialist chains—for breaking through to freedom, and making the heaviest sacrifices in doing so—for, as a socialist republic, although torn and plundered by the imperialists, keeping *out* of the imperialist war and raising the banner of peace, the banner of socialism for the whole world to see.

Small wonder that the international imperialist gang hates us for this, that it "accuses" us, that all the lackeys of the imperialists, including our Right Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, also "accuse" us. The hatred these watchdogs of imperialism express for the Bolsheviks, and the sympathy of the class-conscious workers of the world, convince us more than ever of the justice of our cause.

A real socialist would not fail to understand that for the sake of achieving victory over the bourgeoisie, for the sake of power passing to the workers, for the sake of *starting* the world proletarian revolution, we *cannot* and must *not* hesitate to make the heaviest sacrifices, including the sacrifice of part of our territory, the sacrifice of heavy defeats at the hands of imperialism. A real socialist would have proved by *deeds* his willingness for "his" country to make the greatest sacrifice to give a real push forward to the cause of the socialist revolution.

For the sake of "their" cause, that is, for the sake of winning world hegemony, the imperialists of Britain and Germany have not hesitated to utterly ruin and throttle a whole number of countries, from Belgium and Serbia to Palestine and Mesopotamia. But must socialists wait with "their" cause, the cause of liberating the working people of the whole world from the yoke of capital, of winning universal and lasting peace, until a path without sacrifice is found? Must they fear to open the battle until an easy victory is "guaranteed"? Must they place the integrity and security of "their" bourgeois-created "fatherland" above the interests of the world socialist revolution? The scoundrels in the international socialist movement who think this way those lackeys who grovel to bourgeois morality, thrice stand condemned.

The Anglo-French and American imperialist vultures "accuse" us of concluding an "agreement" with German imperialism. What hypocrites, what scoundrels they are to slander the workers' government while trembling because of the sympathy displayed towards us by the workers of "their own" countries! But their hypocrisy will be exposed. They pretend not to see the difference between an agreement entered into by "socialists" with the bourgeoisie (their own or foreign) *against the workers*, against the working people, and an agreement entered into *for the protection* of the workers who have defeated their bourgeoisie, with the bourgeoisie of one national colour *against the bourgeoisie* of another colour in order that the proletariat may take advantage of the antagonisms between the different groups of bourgeoisie.

In actual fact, every European sees this difference very

well, and, as I shall show in a moment, the American people have had a particularly striking "illustration" of it in their own history. There are agreements and agreements, there are *fagots et fagots*, as the French say.

When in February 1918 the German imperialist vultures hurled their forces against unarmed, demobilised Russia, who had relied on the international solidarity of the proletariat before the world revolution had fully matured, I did not hesitate for a moment to enter into an "agreement" with the French monarchists. Captain Sadoul, a French army officer who, in words, sympathised with the Bolsheviks, but was in deeds a loyal and faithful servant of French imperialism, brought the French officer de Lubersac to see me. "I am a monarchist. My only aim is to secure the defeat of Germany," de Lubersac declared to me. "That goes without saying (*cela va sans dire*)," I replied. But this did not in the least prevent me from entering into an "agreement" with de Lubersac concerning certain services that French army officers, experts in explosives, were ready to render us by blowing up railway lines in order to hinder the German invasion. This is an example of an "agreement" of which every class-conscious worker will approve, an agreement in the interests of socialism. The French monarchist and I shook hands, although we knew that each of us would willingly hang his "partner". But for a time our interests coincided. Against the advancing rapacious Germans, *we*, in the interests of the Russian and the world socialist revolution, utilised the equally rapacious counter-interests of *other* imperialists. In this way we served the interests of the working class of Russia and of other countries, we strengthened the proletariat and weakened the bourgeoisie of the whole world, we resorted to the methods, most legitimate and essential in *every* war, of manoeuvre, stratagem, retreat, in anticipation of the moment when the rapidly maturing proletarian revolution in a number of advanced countries *completely matured*.

However much the Anglo-French and American imperialist sharks fume with rage, however much they slander us, no matter how many millions they spend on bribing the Right Socialist-Revolutionary, Menshevik and other social-

patriotic newspapers, *I shall not hesitate one second* to enter into a *similar* "agreement" with the German imperialist vultures if an attack upon Russia by Anglo-French troops calls for it. And I know perfectly well that my tactics will be approved by the class-conscious proletariat of Russia, Germany, France, Britain, America—in short, of the whole civilised world. Such tactics will ease the task of the socialist revolution, will hasten it, will weaken the international bourgeoisie, will strengthen the position of the working class which is defeating the bourgeoisie.

The American people resorted to these tactics long ago to the advantage of their revolution. When they waged their great war of liberation against the British oppressors, they had also against them the French and the Spanish oppressors who owned a part of what is now the United States of North America. In their arduous war for freedom, the American people also entered into "agreements" with some oppressors against others for the purpose of weakening the oppressors and strengthening those who were fighting in a revolutionary manner against oppression, for the purpose of serving the interests of the oppressed *people*. The American people took advantage of the strife between the French, the Spanish and the British; sometimes they even fought side by side with the forces of the French and Spanish oppressors against the British oppressors; first they defeated the British and then freed themselves (partly by ransom) from the French and the Spanish.

Historical action is not the pavement of Nevsky Prospekt, said the great Russian revolutionary Chernyshevsky. A revolutionary would not "agree" to a proletarian revolution only "on the condition" that it proceeds easily and smoothly, that there is, from the outset, combined action on the part of the proletarians of different countries, that there are guarantees against defeats, that the road of the revolution is broad, free and straight, that it will not be necessary during the march to victory to sustain the heaviest casualties, to "bide one's time in a besieged fortress", or to make one's way along extremely narrow, impassable, winding and dangerous mountain tracks. Such a person is no revolutionary, he has not freed himself from

the pedantry of the bourgeois intellectuals; such a person will be found constantly slipping into the camp of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie, like our Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, Mensheviks and even (although more rarely) Left Socialist-Revolutionaries.

Echoing the bourgeoisie, these gentlemen like to blame us for the "chaos" of the revolution, for the "destruction" of industry, for the unemployment and the food shortage. How hypocritical these accusations are, coming from those who welcomed and supported the imperialist war, or who entered into an "agreement" with Kerensky who continued this war! It is this imperialist war that is the cause of all these misfortunes. The revolution engendered by the war cannot avoid the terrible difficulties and suffering bequeathed it by the prolonged, ruinous, reactionary slaughter of the nations. To blame us for the "destruction" of industry, or for the "terror", is either hypocrisy or dull-witted pedantry; it reveals an inability to understand the basic conditions of the fierce class struggle, raised to the highest degree of intensity that is called revolution.

Even when "accusers" of this type do "recognise" the class struggle, they limit themselves to verbal recognition; actually, they constantly slip into the philistine utopia of class "agreement" and "collaboration"; for in revolutionary epochs the class struggle has always, inevitably, and in every country, assumed the form of *civil war*, and civil war is inconceivable without the severest destruction, terror and the restriction of formal democracy in the interests of this war. Only unctuous parsons—whether Christian or "secular" in the persons of parlour, parliamentary socialists—cannot see, understand and feel this necessity. Only a lifeless "man in the muffler"⁴⁸ can shun the revolution for this reason instead of plunging into battle with the utmost ardour and determination at a time when history demands that the greatest problems of humanity be solved by struggle and war.

The American people have a revolutionary tradition which has been adopted by the best representatives of the American proletariat, who have repeatedly expressed their complete solidarity with us Bolsheviks. That tradition is the war of liberation against the British in the eighteenth

century and the Civil War in the nineteenth century. In some respects, if we only take into consideration the "destruction" of some branches of industry and of the national economy, America in 1870 was *behind* 1860. But what a pedant, what an idiot would anyone be to deny on *these* grounds the immense, world-historic, progressive and revolutionary significance of the American Civil War of 1863-65!

The representatives of the bourgeoisie understand that for the sake of overthrowing Negro slavery, of overthrowing the rule of the slaveowners, it was worth letting the country go through long years of civil war, through the abysmal ruin, destruction and terror that accompany every war. But now, when we are confronted with the vastly greater task of overthrowing capitalist *wage-slavery*, of overthrowing the rule of the bourgeoisie—now, the representatives and defenders of the bourgeoisie, and also the reformist socialists who have been frightened by the bourgeoisie and are shunning the revolution, cannot and do not want to understand that civil war is necessary and legitimate.

The American workers will not follow the bourgeoisie. They will be with us, for civil war against the bourgeoisie. The whole history of the world and of the American labour movement strengthens my conviction that this is so. I also recall the words of one of the most beloved leaders of the American proletariat, Eugene Debs, who wrote in the *Appeal to Reason*,⁴⁹ I believe towards the end of 1915, in the article "What Shall I Fight For" (I quoted this article at the beginning of 1916 at a public meeting of workers in Berne, Switzerland)*—that he, Debs, would rather be shot than vote credits for the present criminal and reactionary war; that he, Debs, knows of only one holy and, from the proletarian standpoint, legitimate war, namely: the war against the capitalists, the war to liberate mankind from *wage-slavery*.

I am not surprised that Wilson, the head of the American multimillionaires and servant of the capitalist sharks, has thrown Debs into prison. Let the bourgeoisie be brutal to

* See *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 125.—Ed.

the true internationalists, to the true representatives of the revolutionary proletariat! The more fierce and brutal they are, the nearer the day of the victorious proletarian revolution.

We are blamed for the destruction caused by our revolution.... Who are the accusers? The hangers-on of the bourgeoisie, of that very bourgeoisie who, during the four years of the imperialist war, have destroyed almost the whole of European culture and have reduced Europe to barbarism, brutality and starvation. These bourgeoisie now demand we should not make a revolution on these ruins, amidst this wreckage of culture, amidst the wreckage and ruins created by the war, nor with the people who have been brutalised by the war. How humane and righteous the bourgeoisie are!

Their servants accuse us of resorting to terror.... The British bourgeoisie have forgotten their 1649, the French bourgeoisie have forgotten their 1793. Terror was just and legitimate when the bourgeoisie resorted to it for their own benefit against feudalism. Terror became monstrous and criminal when the workers and poor peasants dared to use it against the bourgeoisie! Terror was just and legitimate when used for the purpose of substituting one exploiting minority for another exploiting minority. Terror became monstrous and criminal when it began to be used for the purpose of overthrowing *every* exploiting minority, to be used in the interests of the vast actual majority, in the interests of the proletariat and semi-proletariat, the working class and the poor peasants!

The international imperialist bourgeoisie have slaughtered ten million men and maimed twenty million in "their" war, the war to decide whether the British or the German vultures are to rule the world.

If *our* war, the war of the oppressed and exploited against the oppressors and the exploiters, results in half a million or a million casualties in all countries, the bourgeoisie will say that the former casualties are justified, while the latter are criminal.

The proletariat will have something entirely different to say.

Now, amidst the horrors of the imperialist war, the pro-

letariat is receiving a most vivid and striking illustration of the great truth taught by all revolutions and bequeathed to the workers by their best teachers, the founders of modern socialism. This truth is that no revolution can be successful unless *the resistance of the exploiters is crushed*. When we, the workers and toiling peasants, captured state power, it became our duty to crush the resistance of the exploiters. We are proud we have been doing this. We regret we are not doing it with sufficient firmness and determination.

We know that fierce resistance to the socialist revolution on the part of the bourgeoisie is inevitable in all countries, and that this resistance will *grow* with the growth of this revolution. The proletariat will crush this resistance; during the struggle against the resisting bourgeoisie it will finally mature for victory and for power.

Let the corrupt bourgeois press shout to the whole world about every mistake our revolution makes. We are not daunted by our mistakes. People have not become saints because the revolution has begun. The toiling classes who for centuries have been oppressed, downtrodden and forcibly held in the vice of poverty, brutality and ignorance cannot avoid mistakes when making a revolution. And, as I pointed out once before, the corpse of bourgeois society cannot be nailed in a coffin and buried.* The corpse of capitalism is decaying and disintegrating in our midst, polluting the air and poisoning our lives, enmeshing that which is new, fresh, young and virile in thousands of threads and bonds of that which is old, moribund and decaying.

For every hundred mistakes we commit, and which the bourgeoisie and their lackeys (including our own Mensheviks and Right Socialist-Revolutionaries) shout about to the whole world, 10,000 great and heroic deeds are performed, greater and more heroic because they are simple and inconspicuous amidst the everyday life of a factory district or a remote village, performed by people who are not accustomed (and have no opportunity) to shout to the whole world about their successes.

But even if the contrary were true—although I know

* See *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 434.—Ed.

such an assumption is wrong—even if we committed 10,000 mistakes for every 100 correct actions we performed, even in that case our revolution would be great and invincible, and *so it will be in the eyes of world history*, because, *for the first time*, not the minority, not the rich alone, not the educated alone, but the real people, the vast majority of the working people, are *themselves* building a new life, are *by their own experience* solving the most difficult problems of socialist organisation.

Every mistake committed in the course of such work, in the course of this most conscientious and earnest work of tens of millions of simple workers and peasants in reorganising their whole life, every such mistake is worth thousands and millions of "flawless" successes achieved by the exploiting minority—successes in swindling and duping the working people. For only *through* such mistakes will the workers and peasants *learn* to build the new life, learn to do *without* capitalists; only in this way will they hack a path for themselves—through thousands of obstacles—to victorious socialism.

Mistakes are being committed in the course of their revolutionary work by our peasants, who at one stroke, in one night, October 25-26 (old style), 1917, entirely abolished the private ownership of land, and are now, month after month, overcoming tremendous difficulties and correcting their mistakes *themselves*, solving in a practical way the most difficult tasks of organising new conditions of economic life, of fighting the kulaks, providing land for the *working people* (and not for the rich), and of changing to *communist* large-scale agriculture.

Mistakes are being committed in the course of their revolutionary work by our workers, who have already, after a few months, nationalised almost all the biggest factories and plants, and are learning by hard, everyday work the new task of managing whole branches of industry, are setting the nationalised enterprises going, overcoming the powerful resistance of inertia, petty-bourgeois mentality and selfishness, and, brick by brick, are laying the foundation of *new* social ties, of a *new* labour discipline, of a *new* influence of the workers' trade unions over their members.

Mistakes are committed in the course of their revolutionary work by our Soviets, which were created as far back as 1905 by a mighty upsurge of the people. The Soviets of Workers and Peasants are a new *type* of state, a new and higher *type* of democracy, a form of the proletarian dictatorship, a means of administering the state *without* the bourgeoisie and *against* the bourgeoisie. For the first time democracy is here serving the people, the working people, and has ceased to be democracy for the rich as it still is in all bourgeois republics, even the most democratic. For the first time, the people are grappling, on a scale involving one hundred million, with the problem of implementing the dictatorship of the proletariat and semi-proletariat—a problem which, if not solved, makes socialism *out of the question*.

Let the pedants, or the people whose minds are incurably stuffed with bourgeois-democratic or parliamentary prejudices, shake their heads in perplexity about our Soviets, about the absence of direct elections, for example. These people have forgotten nothing and have learned nothing during the period of the great upheavals of 1914-18. The combination of the proletarian dictatorship with the new democracy for the working people—of civil war with the widest participation of the people in politics—such a combination cannot be brought about at one stroke, nor does it fit in with the outworn modes of routine parliamentary democracy. The contours of a new world, the world of socialism, are rising before us in the shape of the Soviet Republic. It is not surprising that this world does not come into being ready-made, does not spring forth like Minerva from the head of Jupiter.

The old bourgeois-democratic constitutions waxed eloquent about formal equality and right of assembly; but our proletarian and peasant Soviet Constitution casts aside the hypocrisy of formal equality. When the bourgeois republicans overturned thrones they did not worry about formal equality between monarchists and republicans. When it is a matter of overthrowing the bourgeoisie, only traitors or idiots can demand formal equality of rights for the bourgeoisie. "Freedom of assembly" for workers and peasants is not worth a farthing when the best buildings

belong to the bourgeoisie. Our Soviets have *confiscated* all the good buildings in town and country from the rich and have *transferred all* of them to the workers and peasants for *their* unions and meetings. This is *our* freedom of assembly—for the working people! This is the meaning and content of our Soviet, our socialist Constitution!

That is why we are all so firmly convinced that no matter what misfortunes may still be in store for it, our Republic of Soviets is *invincible*.

It is invincible because every blow struck by frenzied imperialism, every defeat the international bourgeoisie inflict on us, rouses more and more sections of the workers and peasants to the struggle, teaches them at the cost of enormous sacrifice, steels them and engenders new heroism on a mass scale.

We know that help from you will probably not come soon, comrade American workers, for the revolution is developing in different countries in different forms and at different tempos (and it cannot be otherwise). We know that although the European proletarian revolution has been maturing very rapidly lately, it may, after all, not flare up within the next few weeks. We are banking on the inevitability of the world revolution, but this does not mean that we are such fools as to bank on the revolution inevitably coming on a *definite* and early date. We have seen two great revolutions in our country, 1905 and 1917, and we know revolutions are not made to order, or by agreement. We know that circumstances brought *our* Russian detachment of the socialist proletariat to the fore not because of our merits, but because of the exceptional backwardness of Russia, and that *before* the world revolution breaks out a number of separate revolutions may be defeated.

In spite of this, we are firmly convinced that we are invincible, because the spirit of mankind will not be broken by the imperialist slaughter. Mankind will vanquish it. And the first country to *break* the convict chains of the imperialist war was *our* country. We sustained enormously heavy casualties in the struggle to break these chains, but we *broke* them. We are *free from* imperialist dependence,

we have raised the banner of struggle for the complete overthrow of imperialism for the whole world to see.

We are now, as it were, in a besieged fortress until the other detachments of the world socialist revolution come to our relief. These detachments *exist*, they are *more numerous* than ours, they are maturing, growing, gaining more strength the longer the brutalities of imperialism continue. The workers are breaking away from their social-traitors—the Gomperses, Hendersons, Renaudels, Scheidemanns and Renners. Slowly but surely the workers are adopting communist, Bolshevik tactics and are marching towards the proletarian revolution, which alone is capable of saving dying culture and dying mankind.

In short, we are invincible, because the world proletarian revolution is invincible.

N. Lenin

August 20, 1918

Pravda No. 178
August 22, 1918

Collected Works, Vol. 28,
pp. 62-75

**SIXTH (EXTRAORDINARY) ALL-RUSSIA
CONGRESS OF SOVIETS
OF WORKERS', PEASANTS', COSSACKS'
AND RED ARMY DEPUTIES⁵⁰**

NOVEMBER 6-9, 1918

**SPEECH ON THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION
NOVEMBER 8**

(*Prolonged applause.*) Comrades, from the very beginning of the October Revolution, foreign policy and international relations have been the main questions facing us. Not merely because from now on all the states in the world are being firmly linked by imperialism into a single system, or rather, into one dirty, bloody mass, but because the complete victory of the socialist revolution in one country alone is inconceivable and demands the most active co-operation of at least several advanced countries, which do not include Russia. Hence one of the main problems of the revolution is now the extent to which we succeed in broadening the revolution in other countries too, and the extent to which we succeed meanwhile in warding off imperialism.

I should like to remind you briefly of the main stages of our international policy over the past year. As I have already had occasion to point out in my speech on the anniversary of the revolution, the main feature characterising our position a year ago was that we were on our own.* No matter how sound our conviction that a revolutionary force was being and had been created throughout Europe and that the war would not end without revolution, there were no signs at the time that a revolution had begun or

* See *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, pp. 151.

was beginning. In these circumstances we could do nothing but direct our foreign policy efforts to enlightening the working people of Western Europe. This was not because we claimed to be more enlightened than they, but because so long as the bourgeoisie of a country have not been overthrown, military censorship and that fantastically bloodthirsty atmosphere which accompanies every war, particularly a reactionary one, predominate in that country. You well appreciate that in the most democratic, republican countries, war means military censorship and unprecedented methods employed by the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois military staffs to deceive the people. We set out to share our achievements in this respect with other nations. We did everything possible for this when we annulled and published the disgraceful secret treaties which the ex-tsar had concluded with the British and French capitalists to the benefit of the Russian capitalists. You know that these were downright predatory treaties. You know that the government of Kerensky and the Mensheviks kept these treaties secret and upheld them. By way of exception, we come across statements in that section of the British and French press which is to any degree honest that, thanks only to the Russian revolution, the French and the British learned much that was material to them as regards their diplomatic history.

We have certainly done very little from the point of view of the social revolution as a whole, but what we have done has been one of the greatest steps in its preparation.

If we now make a general survey of the results gained by the exposure of German imperialism, we shall see that it is now obvious to the working people of all countries that they were made to wage a bloody and predatory war. And at the end of this year of war the behaviour of Britain and America is beginning to be exposed in the same way, since the people are opening their eyes and begin to see through the evil designs. That is all we have done, but we have done our bit. The exposure of these treaties was a blow to imperialism. The terms of the peace treaty which we were compelled to conclude proved to be a powerful weapon of propaganda and agitation; we did more with them than any other government or nation has done. But

while it is true that the attempt we made to awaken the people did not produce immediate results, we never even assumed that the revolution would begin immediately, or that all would be lost. During the past fifteen years we have brought about two revolutions, and we have clearly seen how much time must elapse before they grip the people. Recent events in Austria and Germany confirm this. We said that we had no intention of allying ourselves with robbers and becoming robbers ourselves; no, we expected to arouse the proletariat of the enemy countries. We were jeered at and told we were preparing to arouse the German proletariat which would strangle us while we were preparing to launch a propaganda attack. But facts have shown we were right to assume that the working people in all countries are equally hostile to imperialism. They only need to be given a certain period for preparation; despite memories of the 1905 Revolution, it took the Russian people, too, some time before they rose again to the revolution.

Before the Brest-Litovsk Peace we did everything in our power to hit at imperialism. If the history of the growth of the proletarian revolution did not completely wipe this out, and if the Brest-Litovsk Peace forced us to retreat before imperialism, this was because we were insufficiently prepared in January 1918. Fate condemned us to isolation, and we went through an agonising period after the Brest-Litovsk Peace.

Comrades, the four years which we spent in world war ended in peace, but on onerous terms. In the final analysis, however, even these onerous peace terms proved that we were right and that our hopes were not built on sand. With every passing month we grew stronger while West-European imperialism grew weaker. Now, as a result, we see that Germany, who six months ago completely ignored our Embassy and thought there could be no Red institution there, recently, at any rate, has been weakening. The latest telegram informs us of the German imperialists' appeal to the people to keep calm, saying that peace is near at hand. We know what is meant when monarchs appeal for calm and promise to do the impossible in the near future. If Germany gets peace soon, it will be a Brest-

Litovsk Peace, which instead of peace will bring the working people more misery than ever.

The results of our international policy shaped in such a way that six months after the Brest-Litovsk Peace we were a devastated country to the bourgeoisie, but, to the proletariat, we were rapidly developing and now head the proletarian army which has begun to shake Austria and Germany. This success vindicated and fully justified all our sacrifices in any worker's eyes. If we were to be suddenly wiped out, if our activities were to be cut short—this is impossible since miracles do not happen—yet if this were to happen we would be justified in saying, without concealing our mistakes, that we have made full use of the period, offered us by fate, for the world socialist revolution. We have done everything possible for the working people of Russia, and we have done more than anyone else for the world proletarian revolution. (*Applause.*)

In recent months, and in recent weeks, the international situation has begun to change sharply; now German imperialism is almost completely defeated. All designs on the Ukraine which the German imperialists fostered among their working people proved to be empty promises. It turned out that American imperialism was ready, and a blow was struck at Germany. A totally different situation has arisen. We have been under no illusions. After the October Revolution we were considerably weaker than imperialism and even now we are weaker than international imperialism. We must repeat this now so as not to deceive ourselves: following the October Revolution we were weaker and could not fight. Now we are weaker too and must do everything we can to avoid a clash with imperialism.

That we were able to survive a year after the October Revolution was due to the split of international imperialism into two predatory groups: Anglo-French-American on the one hand, and German on the other, which were locked in mortal combat, and which had no time for us. Neither group could muster large forces against us, which they would have done had they been in a position to do so. They were blinded by the bloodthirsty atmosphere of war. The material sacrifices required to carry on the war

demanded the utmost concentration of their efforts. They had no time for us, not because by some miracle we were stronger than the imperialists—no, that would be nonsense—but only because international imperialism had split into two predatory groups which were at each other's throats. Only thanks to this the Soviet Republic was able to openly declare war on the imperialists of all countries, depriving them of their capital in the shape of foreign loans, slapping them in the face and openly emptying their plunder-laden pockets.

An end has come to the period of declarations which we then made over the correspondence started by the German imperialists, even though world imperialism could not tear into us as it should have done in line with its hostility and thirst for capitalist profits, which had been fantastically expanded by the war. Until the moment of the Anglo-American imperialists' victory over the other group they were fully occupied fighting among themselves, and so had no chance to launch a decisive campaign against the Soviet Republic. There is no longer a second group. Only one group of victors remains. This has completely altered our international position, and we must take this change into account. The facts show how this change bears on the development of the international situation. The workers' revolution is now winning in the defeated countries; everyone can clearly see what tremendous advances it has made. When we took power in October we were nothing more in Europe than a single spark. True, the sparks began to fly, and they flew from us. This is our greatest achievement, but even so, these were isolated sparks. Now most countries within the sphere of German-Austrian imperialism are aflame (Bulgaria, Austria and Hungary). We know that from Bulgaria the revolution has spread to Serbia. We know how these worker-peasant revolutions passed through Austria and reached Germany. Several countries are enveloped in the flames of workers' revolution. In this respect our efforts and sacrifices have been justified. They were not reckless adventures, as our enemies slanderously claimed, but an essential step towards world revolution, which had to be taken by

the country that had been placed in the lead, despite its underdevelopment and backwardness.

This is one result, and the most important from the point of view of the final outcome of the imperialist war. The other result is the one to which I referred earlier, that Anglo-American imperialism is now exposing itself in the same way as Austro-German did in its time. We can see that if, at the time of the Brest-Litovsk negotiations, Germany had been somewhat level-headed, able to keep herself in check and to refrain from making gambles, she would have been able to maintain her domination and undoubtedly could have secured an advantageous position in the West. She did not do this because when a machine like a war involving millions and tens of millions, a war which inflamed chauvinist passions to the utmost, a war bound up with capitalist interests totalling hundreds of billions of rubles—when such a machine has gathered full speed there are no brakes that can stop it. This machine went farther than the German imperialists themselves desired, and they were crushed by it. They were stuck; they ended up like a man who had gorged himself to death. And now, before our very eyes, British and American imperialism is in this extremely ugly, but, from the viewpoint of the revolutionary proletariat, extremely useful position. You might have thought they would have had much greater political experience than Germany. Here are people used to democratic rule, not to the rule of some Junker or other, people who went through the hardest period of their history hundreds of years ago. You might have thought these people would have retained their presence of mind. If we were to speak as individuals, from the point of view of democracy in general, as bourgeois philistines, professors, who have understood nothing from the struggle between imperialism and the working class, whether or not they were capable of level-headedness, if we reasoned from the point of view of democracy in general, then we would have to say that Britain and America are countries with a centuries-old tradition of democracy, that the bourgeoisie there would be able to hold their ground. If by some means they were to succeed now in holding on, this would at any rate be for a fairly long

period. But it seems that the same thing is happening to them as happened to the militarist-despotic Germany. In this imperialist war there is a tremendous difference between Russia and the republican countries. The imperialist war is so steeped in blood, so predatory and bestial, that it has effaced even these important differences, and in this respect it has brought the freest democracy of America to the level of semi-militarist, despotic Germany.

We see that Britain and America, countries which had greater opportunities than others for remaining democratic republics, have overdone things as savagely and insanely as Germany did in her time, and so they are heading, just as quickly, and perhaps even faster, towards the end so successfully arrived at by German imperialism. It swelled out fantastically over three-quarters of Europe, became distended and then burst, leaving behind it an awful stench. Now British and American imperialism is racing to the same end. You only have to take a cursory glance at the armistice and peace terms which the British and Americans, the "liberators" of the people from German imperialism, are presenting to the defeated nations. Take Bulgaria. You would have thought that a country like Bulgaria could hold no terror for the Anglo-American imperialist colossus. Nevertheless, the revolution in this small, weak, absolutely helpless country caused the Anglo-Americans to lose their heads and present armistice terms that are tantamount to occupation. In this country where a peasants' republic has been proclaimed, in Sofia, an important railway junction, the whole railway is now in the hands of Anglo-American troops. They are forced to fight this little peasants' republic. From the military point of view this is a walkover. People who take the view of the bourgeoisie, of the old ruling class, of old military relations, merely smile contemptuously. What does this pygmy Bulgaria signify in comparison with the Anglo-American forces? Nothing from the military standpoint, but a great deal from the revolutionary standpoint. This is not a colony where they are used to exterminating the defeated people in their millions. The British and Americans consider this is only establishing law and order, bringing civilisation and Christianity to African savages.

But this is not Central Africa. Here the soldiers, no matter how strong their army, become demoralised when they come up against a revolution. Germany is proof enough of this. In Germany, at any rate as regards discipline, the soldiers were model army men. Yet when the Germans marched into the Ukraine, factors other than discipline came into play. The starving German soldier marched for bread, and it would have been unrealistic to demand that he should not steal too much bread. Moreover, we know that in this country he was most of all infected by the spirit of the Russian revolution. The German bourgeoisie were well aware of this and it caused Wilhelm to panic. The Hohenzollerns are mistaken if they imagine that Germany will shed a single drop of blood for them. This is the result of the policy of bellicose German imperialism. The same thing is repeating itself in regard to Britain. The Anglo-American army is already becoming demoralised; this began as soon as it launched the ferocious campaign against Bulgaria. And this is only the beginning. Austria followed Bulgaria. Permit me to read you some of the clauses of the terms dictated by the Anglo-American imperialist victors.* These are the people who most of all shouted to the working people that they were conducting a war of liberation, that their chief aim was to crush Prussian militarism which threatened to spread the despotic regime over all countries. They shouted loudest that they were conducting a war of liberation. This was a deception. You know that bourgeois lawyers, these parliamentarians who have spent their whole lives learning the art of deception without blushing, find it easy to deceive each other—but they don't get away with it when they have to deceive the workers in the same way. British and American politicians and parliamentarians are past masters at

* A newspaper account of Lenin's speech published in *Pravda* No. 243, November 10, 1918, quotes the following terms: "The Complete demobilisation of Austria-Hungary. Half of the artillery materiel is to be handed over to the Allies. All evacuated regions are to be occupied by the Allies. The British and American troops are to maintain order in these regions. The Allies will have free access to all railways and waterways. The Allies are entitled to the right to requisition."—Ed.

this art. But they will not get away with deception. The working people, whom they incited in the name of freedom, will come to their senses straight away, and even more so when, on a mass scale, not from proclamations (which help, but do not really move the revolution), but from their own experience, they see they are being deceived, when they become aware of the peace terms with Austria.

These are peace terms now being forced on a comparatively weak, disintegrating state by people who shouted that the Bolsheviks were traitors because they signed the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty. When the Germans wanted to send their soldiers to Moscow, we said we would rather all die in battle than agree to this. (*Applause.*) We told ourselves great sacrifices would have to be made in the occupied areas, but everybody knows how Soviet Russia helped and kept them supplied with necessities. Now the democratic troops of Britain and France will have to serve to "maintain law and order", and this when there are Soviets of Workers' Deputies in Bulgaria and Serbia, when there are Soviets of Workers' Deputies in Vienna and Budapest. We know what kind of order this means. It means that the Anglo-American troops are to be the throttlers and executioners of the world revolution.

Comrades, when the Russian serf troops were sent to suppress the Hungarian Revolution in 1848,⁵¹ they were able to get away with it because they were serfs; they were able to get away with it in relation to Poland.⁵² But people who have known freedom for a century and who were incited to hate German imperialism because it was a beast which had to be destroyed, must understand that Anglo-American imperialism is the same sort of beast whom it would be only right to destroy as well!

And now history, with its usual malicious irony, has arrived at the point where, after the exposure of German imperialism, it is the turn of Anglo-French imperialism to utterly expose itself. We declare to the Russian, German and Austrian working people that these are not the Russian serf troops of 1848! They will not get away with it! They are out to stop people getting from capitalism to freedom and to suppress the revolution. We are abso-

lutely convinced that this bloated monster will fall into the same abyss as did the German imperialist monster.

I now turn to matters which affect us most of all. I shall begin with the peace terms which Germany will have to agree to.⁵³ The comrades from the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs told me that *The Times*, the chief mouth-piece of the fabulously rich British bourgeoisie who actually shape the entire policy, has already published the terms to be imposed on Germany. She is expected to hand over Heligoland and the Wilhelmshaven Canal, Essen, where practically all military equipment is manufactured, disband her merchant fleet, immediately hand over Alsace-Lorraine and pay indemnities totalling 60 thousand million, a great part of which must be paid in kind because money has depreciated everywhere and British merchants too have begun to calculate in another currency. We can see that the peace terms they are preparing for Germany will be completely devastating, far harsher than the Brest-Litovsk terms. They are strong enough materially and physically to do so if it were not for the existence of that awful Bolshevism. By imposing these peace terms they are preparing their own doom. For this is happening in civilised countries in the twentieth century, not in Central Africa. The once disciplined German soldier who put down the illiterate Ukrainian people has now buried his discipline. So it is all the more certain that the British and American imperialists will bury themselves when they make the gamble, which will bring about their political downfall, of turning their troops into throttlers and gendarmes of all Europe. They have been trying to destroy Russia for some time, and have been thinking of attacking her for some time. You only have to recall the Murmansk occupation, the millions they squandered on the Czechs, the treaty they concluded with Japan. And now Britain has a treaty with the Turks which gives her Baku so that she may strangle us by depriving us of raw materials.

British troops are ready to attack Russia from the South, through the Dardanelles or through Bulgaria and Rumania. They are closing in around the Soviet Republic, they are trying to cut off our economic contacts with the whole world. For this reason they compelled Holland to break

off diplomatic relations with us.⁵⁴ When Germany expelled our Ambassador⁵⁵ she acted, if not in direct agreement with Anglo-French policy, then hoping to do them a service so that they should be magnanimous to her. The implication was: we are also fulfilling the duties of executioner against the Bolsheviks, your enemies.

Comrades, we should say that the main point about the international situation is (as I mentioned the other day) that we have never been so near to world proletarian revolution as we are now. We have proved we were not mistaken in banking on world proletarian revolution. Our great national and economic sacrifices were not made in vain. We achieved successes. Yet if we have never previously been so close to world revolution, then it is also true to say that we have never been in such a dangerous situation as we are now. The imperialists were busy among themselves, but now one group has been wiped out by the Anglo-French-American group, which considers its main task to be the extermination of world Bolshevism and the strangulation of its main centre, the Russian Soviet Republic. To do this, they intend to surround themselves with a Great Wall of China so as to keep out the plague, the plague of Bolshevism. These people are trying to rid themselves of Bolshevism by going into quarantine, but this cannot be done. Even if these Anglo-French imperialist gentlemen, who possess the best techniques in the world, succeed in building this Great Wall around the Republic, the germ of Bolshevism will still penetrate the wall and infect the workers of the world. (*Applause.*)

Comrades, the West-European press, the press of Anglo-French imperialism, tries its hardest to keep silent about the state of imperialism. No lie or slander is vile enough to use against the Soviet government. It is true to say now that all the Anglo-French and American papers, with financial backing running into billions, are in capitalist hands and that they act in one syndicate to suppress the truth about Soviet Russia, to spread lies and slander about us. Yet despite the fact that for years there has been a military censorship which has prevented a word of truth about the Soviet Republic from appearing in the newspapers of the democratic countries, not a single large workers' meet-

ing held anywhere goes by without the workers siding with the Bolsheviks, because it is impossible to hide the truth. The enemy accuses us of implementing the dictatorship of the proletariat. They are right and we do not hide it. The fact that the Soviet Government is not afraid and openly admits this attracts more millions of workers to its side, because the dictatorship is directed against the exploiters, and the working people see and are convinced that the struggle we are waging against the exploiters is a serious one and will be brought to a serious conclusion. Although the European papers surround us with a conspiracy of silence, they have so far announced that they regard it their duty to attack Russia because Russia surrendered to Germany, because Russia is in fact a German agent, because government leaders in Russia, they claim, are German agents. New forged documents, for which a good price is paid, appear every month proving that Lenin and Trotsky are downright traitors and German agents. Despite all this they cannot hide the truth, and from time to time there are open signs that the imperialist gentlemen feel uneasy. *L'Echo de Paris* admits: "We are going into Russia to break the power of the Bolsheviks." Their official line is that they are only fighting German domination, not conducting a war with Russia and not interfering in military matters. Our French internationalists who publish the *III-me Internationale*⁵⁶ in Moscow cited this quotation, and although we have been cut off from Paris and France by an extremely elaborate Great Wall of China, we tell the French imperialist gentlemen that they cannot defend themselves from their own bourgeoisie. Indeed, hundreds of thousands of French workers know this small quotation, and others too, and see that all the declarations of their rulers, of their bourgeoisie, are nothing but lies. Their own bourgeoisie let the cat out of the bag; they acknowledge that they want to break the power of the Bolsheviks. After four years of bloody war they have to tell their people: go and fight again against Russia to break the power of the Bolsheviks whom we hate because they owe us 17 thousand million⁵⁷ and won't pay up, because they are rude to capitalists, landowners and tsars. Civilised nations, who come down to admitting such things,

patently betray the failure of their policy. No matter how strong they may be militarily we calmly review their strength and say: but you have in your rear an even more terrible enemy—the common people, whom you have deceived up to now; so much so that your tongue has dried up from the lies and slander you have spread about Soviet Russia. Similar information may be gleaned from *The Manchester Guardian* of October 23. This British bourgeois newspaper writes: "If the Allied armies still remain in Russia and still operate in Russia, their purpose can only be to effect a revolution in . . . Russia. The Allied governments must, therefore, either . . . put an end to their operations in Russia or announce that they are at war with Bolshevism."

I repeat that the significance of this small quotation, which sounds to us like a revolutionary call, like a powerful revolutionary appeal, is that it is written by a bourgeois newspaper, which is itself an enemy of the socialists, but feels that the truth can no longer be hidden. If bourgeois papers write in this vein you can imagine what the British workers must be thinking and saying. You know the sort of language used by the liberals in tsarist times, prior to the 1905 and 1917 revolutions. You know this language heralded an impending explosion amidst the revolutionary proletariat. From the language of these British bourgeois liberals, therefore, you can draw conclusions about what is going on in the moods, minds and hearts of the British, French and American workers. We must, therefore, face the bitter truth about our international position. The world revolution is not far off, but it cannot develop according to a special time-table. Having survived two revolutions we well appreciate this. We know, however, that although the imperialists cannot contain the world revolution, certain countries are likely to be defeated, and even heavier losses are possible. They know that Russia is in the birth-pangs of a proletarian revolution, but they are mistaken if they think that by crushing one centre of the revolution they will crush the revolution in other countries.

We, for our part, must admit that the situation is more dangerous than ever before, that once again we shall have

to summon up every effort. Over the past year we have laid a firm foundation, created a socialist Red Army with a new discipline, and we are absolutely certain that we can and must continue the work we are doing. At all meetings, in every Soviet institution, at trade union meetings and at meetings of Poor Peasants' Committees we must say: Comrades, we have survived a year and have achieved some success, but all this is still insufficient when we consider the powerful enemy bearing down on us. This enemy, Anglo-French imperialism, is world-wide, powerful and has defeated the whole world. We are going to fight it not because we think ourselves economically and technically on a par with the advanced countries of Europe. No, but we do know this enemy is going to topple into the abyss into which Austro-German imperialism once toppled; we know that the enemy, which has now ensnared Turkey, seized Bulgaria and is bent on occupying the whole of Austria-Hungary with the object of establishing a tsarist, gendarme regime, is heading for its doom. We know this as an historical fact, and that is why, while in no way attempting the impossible, we say we can beat off Anglo-French imperialism!

Every step in strengthening our Red Army will be echoed by a dozen steps in the disintegration of and revolutions in this apparently all-powerful enemy. There is therefore no cause whatsoever for despair or pessimism. We know the danger is great. It may be that fate has even heavier sacrifices in store for us. Even if they can crush one country, they can never crush the world proletarian revolution, they will only add more fuel to the flames that will consume them all. (*Prolonged applause passing into ovation.*)

Newspaper reports published in
Izvestia No. 244, November 9,
1918, and in *Pravda* No. 243,
November 10, 1918

First published in full in 1919
in the book *Extraordinary Sixth All-Russia Congress of Soviets. Verbatim Report*, Moscow

Collected Works, Vol. 28,
pp. 151-64

THE ACHIEVEMENTS AND DIFFICULTIES OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT

(Extract)

The most important of our experiences is the Brest peace. This is the most significant result of the foreign policy of the Council of People's Commissars. We were obliged to play for time, to retreat, manoeuvre and sign a most humiliating peace treaty, and in this way gain an opportunity to lay the foundation of a new socialist army. This foundation we have laid, while our once mighty and all-powerful enemy is already powerless.

All over the world things are moving in the same direction, and this is the chief and principal lesson that we must learn and try to understand as clearly as possible in order to avoid making mistakes in the extremely intricate, extremely difficult and extremely involved problems of foreign policy which any day may confront the Council of People's Commissars, the Central Executive Committee, and Soviet power as a whole.

I shall conclude my remarks on foreign policy with this and proceed to deal with some other extremely important questions.

Comrades, as regards activities in the military field—a year ago, in February and March 1918, we had no army at all. We had, perhaps, ten million armed workers and peasants who constituted the old army that had collapsed completely, was fully ready and determined to desert, to flee, to abandon everything, come what may.

At that time this was regarded as an exclusively Rus-

sian phenomenon. People thought that owing to the Russians' characteristic impatience, or lack of organisation, they would not hold out, whereas the Germans would.

That is what we were told. And now we see that a few months have passed and the same thing has happened to the German army, which was immeasurably superior to ours in culture, equipment, and discipline, in providing decent conditions for the sick and wounded, as regards home leave, and so forth. Even the most cultured and disciplined masses could not stand the slaughter, the many years of slaughter, and so a period of absolute disintegration set in when even the advanced German army broke down.

Evidently, there is a limit not only for Russia but for all countries. There are different limits for different countries, but for all of them there is a limit beyond which it is impossible to continue to wage war for the sake of the interests of the capitalists. This is what we see today.

German imperialism has completely exposed itself as a predator. The most important thing is that even in America and in France, in these notorious democracies (the traitors to socialism, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, those hapless people who call themselves socialists, are fond of chattering about democracies), in these most advanced democracies of the world, in these republics, imperialism is becoming more arrogant every day and we find there beasts of prey more predatory than anywhere else. They are plundering the world, fighting each other, and arming against each other. This cannot be concealed for long. It could be concealed when the war fever was at its height. But the fever is subsiding, peace is approaching, and it is precisely in these democracies that the masses see, in spite of all the lies they are being told, that the war has led to fresh plunder, that the most democratic republic is nothing more nor less than a disguise for the most brutal and cynical predator who is ready to ruin hundreds of millions of people in order to pay the debts, that is, to pay the imperialist gentlemen, the capitalists, for being good enough to allow the workers to cut each other's throats. This is becoming clearer to the masses every day.

It is this situation that makes possible political statements such as the article written by the military correspondent of a newspaper that belongs to the richest and most politically experienced bourgeoisie, the *London Times*; the author appraises events by saying that all over the world the armies are breaking up and there is only one country where the army is being built up, and that country is Russia.

The bourgeoisie—which militarily is far stronger than Soviet Bolshevism—is compelled to admit this fact. And this fact serves as a criterion of what we have accomplished in the course of our Soviet activities in the past year.

We succeeded in reaching a turning-point where instead of an army of ten million, the bulk of which had deserted, unable to stand the horrors of war, and which had realised that this was a criminal war, we began to build, one hundred thousand after another, a socialist army, which knows what it is fighting for and is ready to make greater sacrifices and suffer more privation than under tsarism. For this army knows that it is fighting for its own cause, for its own land, for its own power in the factories, that it is defending the power of the working people, and that the working people of other countries are awakening, slowly and with great difficulty, but awakening nevertheless.

This is the situation that characterises the year's experience of Soviet power.

War is an incredible hardship for Soviet Russia, war is an incredible hardship for a people who for four years have borne the horrors of the imperialist war. For Soviet Russia war is an incredibly heavy burden. But at the present time even our powerful enemies admit that their armies are cracking up, whereas our army is being built. For the first time in history an army is being built on the basis of the closest contact, inseverable contact, coalescence, one might say, of the army and the Soviets. The Soviets unite all the working people, all the exploited, and the army is being built up for the purpose of socialist defence and on the basis of class-consciousness.

An eighteenth-century Prussian monarch once wisely remarked: "If our soldiers knew what we were fighting for, it would be impossible to wage a single war." That old

Prussian monarch was no fool. We, however, are prepared to say, comparing our position with that of the monarch, that we can wage war because the masses know what they are fighting for; and they want to fight notwithstanding the incredible burdens—burdens, I repeat, far greater than under tsarism—knowing that they are making these desperate and incredibly heavy sacrifices in defence of their socialist cause, fighting side by side with those workers of other countries who are becoming “demoralised” and are beginning to understand our position.

Some foolish people are shouting about red militarism. These are political crooks who pretend that they believe this absurdity and throw charges of this kind right and left, exercising their lawyers' skill in concocting plausible arguments and in throwing dust in the eyes of the masses. And the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries shout: “Look, instead of socialism, they are giving you red militarism!”

What a “horrible” crime, indeed! The imperialists of the whole world hurled themselves upon the Russian Republic in order to crush it, and we began to form an army which for the first time in history knows what it is fighting for and what it is making sacrifices for, which is successfully contending against a numerically superior enemy, and which with every month of its resistance on an unprecedented scale is bringing nearer the world revolution, and this is denounced as red militarism!

I repeat, these are either fools to whom no political appraisal can apply, or else political crooks.

Everybody knows that this war was forced upon us. We brought the old war to a close at the beginning of 1918, and did not start a new war. Everybody knows that the whiteguards attacked us in the West, South and East, only because they were assisted by the Entente, which scattered millions right and left. And these advanced countries collected and handed over to the whiteguards the vast stocks of war supplies and ammunition left over from the imperialist war, for those gentlemen, the millionaires and multimillionaires, know that their fate is being decided here, that it is here they will perish if they do not crush us at once.

The socialist republic is straining every nerve, is making sacrifices and winning victories. And if after a year of civil war you look at the map and compare what Soviet Russia was in March 1918 and in July 1918—when the German imperialists in the West occupied the line laid down by the Treaty of Brest, when the Ukraine was under the heel of the German imperialists, when the Czechoslovaks, bribed by the French and British, lorded it in the East as far as Kazan and Simbirsk—if you look at the map today, you will see that we have expanded immensely, that we have won enormous victories.

In this situation, only sordid and despicable political crooks can use strong language and accuse us of red militarism.

Never in history has there been a revolution in which it was possible to lay down one's arms and rest on one's laurels after the victory. Whoever thinks that such revolutions are possible is not only no revolutionary, but the worst enemy of the working class. There has never been a revolution, even a second-rate one, even a bourgeois revolution in which the only issue was the transfer of power from one propertied minority to another. We know of examples! The French revolution, against which the old powers hurled themselves at the beginning of the nineteenth century in order to crush it, we call great precisely because it succeeded in rousing the vast masses of the people in defence of its gains and they resisted the whole world; this was one of its greatest merits.

Revolutions are subjected to the most serious tests in the fire of battle. If you are oppressed and exploited and think of throwing off the power of the exploiters, if you are determined to carry this to its logical conclusion, you must understand that you will have to contend against the onslaught of the exploiters of the whole world. If you are ready to offer resistance and to make further sacrifices in order to hold out in the struggle, you are a revolutionary; if not, you will be crushed.

This is how the question is presented by the history of all revolutions.

The real test to which our revolution is being subjected is that we, in a backward country, succeeded in capturing

power before the others, succeeded in establishing the Soviet form of government, the power of the working and exploited people. Shall we be able to hold on at least until the masses in the other countries make a move? If we are not prepared to make fresh sacrifices and do not hold out, it will be said that our revolution was historically unjustified. But democrats in civilised countries who are armed to the teeth dread the presence of a hundred or so Bolsheviks in a free republic with a hundred million population, in the way America does. Bolshevism is so infectious! And it turns out that the democrats cannot cope with a hundred immigrants from starving, ruined Russia who might talk about Bolshevism! The masses sympathise with us! The bourgeoisie have only one path of salvation, and that is, while their hand still grasps the sword, while they still control the guns, to turn these guns against Soviet Russia and to crush her in a few months, because later on nothing will crush her. This is the situation we are in; this is what determined the military policy of the Council of People's Commissars during the past year; and this is why, pointing to the facts, to the results, we have a right to say that we have stood the test only because the workers and peasants, though utterly exhausted by war, are creating a new army under still more arduous conditions and are displaying new heroism.

Published in pamphlet form
by the Petrograd Soviet of Workers'
and Red Army Deputies,
March-April 1919

Collected Works, Vol. 29,
pp. 63-68

EIGHTH CONGRESS OF THE R.C.P.(B.)⁵⁸

MARCH 18-23, 1919

1

FROM THE REPORT OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE MARCH 18

To begin with foreign policy, it goes without saying that the outstanding features here were our relations with German imperialism and the Brest peace. I think it is worth while dwelling on this question, because its importance is not merely historical. I think that the proposal the Soviet government made to the Allied powers, or, to put it more correctly, our government's consent to the well-known proposal for a conference to be held on Princes Islands⁵⁹ —I think that this proposal, and our reply, reflect, in some respects, and in important respects at that, the relations with imperialism that we established at the time of the Brest peace. That is why I think it important to deal with the history of this matter in view of the rapidity with which events are occurring.

When the Brest peace was decided on, the Soviet system and even Party development were still in the initial stages. You know that at that time our Party as a whole still possessed too little experience to determine, even approximately, how fast we should travel the path we had chosen. The chaotic conditions that, as you know, we had to take over from the past made it extremely difficult at that time to survey events and obtain an exact picture of what was going on. Moreover, our extreme isolation from Western Europe and all other countries deprived us of the objective material necessary to assess the possible rapidity or the ways in which the proletarian revolution in the West would develop. This complex situation made the question

of the Brest peace a matter of no little dissension in the ranks of our Party.

But events have proved that this enforced retreat before German imperialism, which had taken cover behind an extremely oppressive, outrageous and predatory peace, was the only correct move in the relations between the young socialist republic and world imperialism (one half of world imperialism). At that time we, who had just overthrown the landowners and the bourgeoisie in Russia, had absolutely no choice but to retreat before the forces of world imperialism. Those who condemned this retreat from the point of view of a revolutionary were actually supporting a fundamentally wrong and non-Marxist position. They had forgotten the conditions, the long and strenuous process of development of the Kerensky period, and the enormous preparatory work done in the Soviets before we reached the stage when in October, after the severe July defeats, after the Kornilov revolt, the vast mass of working people was at last ready and determined to overthrow the bourgeoisie, and when the organised material forces necessary for this purpose had become available. Naturally, anything like this was then out of the question on an international scale. In view of this, the fight against world imperialism had this aim—to continue the work of disintegrating imperialism and of enlightening and uniting the working class, which had everywhere begun to stir, but whose actions have still not become completely definite.

Hence, the only correct policy was the one we adopted in respect of the Brest peace, although, of course, at the time, that policy intensified the enmity of a number of petty-bourgeois elements, who are not by any means necessarily hostile to socialism under all conditions, or in all countries. In this respect history offered us a lesson which we must learn thoroughly, for there can be no doubt that we shall often be called upon to apply it. This lesson is that the attitude the party of the proletariat should adopt towards the petty-bourgeois democratic parties, towards those elements, strata, groups and classes which are particularly strong and numerous in Russia, and which exist in all countries, constitutes an extremely complex and difficult problem. Petty-bourgeois elements vacillate

between the old society and the new. They cannot be the motive force of either the old society, or the new. On the other hand, they are not bound to the old society to the same degree as the landowners and the bourgeoisie. Patriotism is a sentiment bound up with the economic conditions of life of precisely the small proprietors. The bourgeoisie is more international than the small proprietors. We came up against this fact during the period of the Brest peace, when the Soviet government set a higher value on the world dictatorship of the proletariat and the world revolution than on all national sacrifices, burdensome as they were. This compelled us to enter into a violent and ruthless clash with the petty-bourgeois elements. At that time a number of those elements joined forces with the bourgeoisie and the landowners against us, although, subsequently, they began to waver.

The question that several comrades have raised here as to our attitude towards the petty-bourgeois parties is dealt with extensively in our programme and will, in fact, crop up in the discussion of every point of the agenda. In the course of our revolution this question has ceased to be an abstract and general one, and has become concrete. At the time of the Brest peace our duty as internationalists was at all costs to help the proletarian elements to strengthen and consolidate their positions and this drove the petty-bourgeois parties away from us. After the German revolution, as we know, the petty-bourgeois elements again began to vacillate. Those events opened the eyes of many who, as the proletarian revolution was maturing, had assessed the situation from the point of view of the old type of patriotism, and had assessed it not only in a non-socialist way, but, in general, incorrectly. At the present time, owing to the difficult food situation and the war which we are still waging against the Entente, a wave of vacillation is again sweeping through the petty-bourgeois democrats. We were obliged to reckon with these vacillations before; but now we must all learn a tremendously important lesson, namely, that situations never repeat themselves in exactly the same form. The new situation is far more complex. It can be properly assessed, and our policy will be correct, if we draw on the experience of the

Brest peace. When we consented to the proposal for a conference on Princes Islands we knew that we were consenting to an extremely harsh peace. On the other hand, however, we now know better how the tide of proletarian revolution is rising in Western Europe, how unrest is changing into conscious discontent, and how the latter is giving rise to a world, Soviet, proletarian movement. At that time we were groping, guessing when the revolution in Europe might break out—we presumed, on the basis of our theoretical conviction, that the revolution must take place—but today we have a number of facts showing how the revolution is maturing in other countries and how the movement began. That is why, in relation to Western Europe, in relation to the Entente countries, we have, or shall have, to repeat a good deal of what we did at the time of the Brest peace. It will be much easier for us to do this now that we have the experience of Brest. When our Central Committee discussed the question of participating in a conference on Princes Islands together with the Whites—which in fact amounted to the annexation of all the territory the Whites then occupied—this question of an armistice did not evoke a single voice of protest among the proletariat; and that also was the attitude of our Party. At any rate, I did not hear of any dissatisfaction, or indignation, from any quarter. The reason for this was that our lesson in international politics had borne fruit.

Published in *Pravda*,
March-April 1919

Collected Works, Vol. 29,
pp. 146-49

2

**FROM THE REPORT ON THE PARTY PROGRAMME
MARCH 19**

We say that account must be taken of the stage reached by the given nation on its way from medievalism to bourgeois democracy, and from bourgeois democracy to proletarian democracy. That is absolutely correct. All nations have the right to self-determination—there is no need to speak specially of the Hottentots and the Bushmen. The vast majority, most likely nine-tenths of the population of the earth, perhaps 95 per cent, come under this description, since all countries are on the way from medievalism to bourgeois democracy or from bourgeois democracy to proletarian democracy. This is an absolutely inevitable course. More cannot be said, because it would be wrong, because it would not be what actually exists. To reject the self-determination of nations and insert the self-determination of the working people would be absolutely wrong, because this manner of settling the question does not reckon with the difficulties, with the zigzag course taken by differentiation within nations. In Germany it is not proceeding in the same way as in our country—in certain respects more rapidly, and in other respects in a slower and more sanguinary way. Not a single party in our country accepted so monstrous an idea as a combination of workers' councils and a Constituent Assembly. And yet we have to live side by side with these nations. Now Scheidemann's party is already saying that we want to conquer Germany. That is of course ridiculous, nonsensi-

cal. But the bourgeoisie have their own interests and their own press which is shouting this to the whole world in hundreds of millions of copies; Wilson, too, is supporting this in his own interests. The Bolsheviks, they declare, have a large army, and they want, by means of conquest, to implant their Bolshevism in Germany. The best people in Germany—the Spartacists⁶⁰—told us that the German workers are being incited against the Communists; look, they are told, how bad things are with the Bolsheviks! And we cannot say that things with us are very good. And so our enemies in Germany influence the people with the argument that the proletarian revolution in Germany would result in the same disorders as in Russia. Our disorders are a protracted illness. We are contending with desperate difficulties in creating the proletarian dictatorship in our country. As long as the bourgeoisie, or the petty bourgeoisie, or even part of the German workers, are under the influence of this bugbear—"the Bolsheviks want to establish their system by force"—so long will the formula "the self-determination of the working people" not help matters. We must arrange things so that the German traitor-socialists will not be able to say that the Bolsheviks are trying to impose their universal system, which, as it were, can be brought into Berlin on Red Army bayonets. And this is what may happen if the principle of the self-determination of nations is denied.

Our programme must not speak of the self-determination of the working people, because that would be wrong. It must speak of what actually exists. Since nations are at different stages on the road from medievalism to bourgeois democracy and from bourgeois democracy to proletarian democracy, this thesis of our programme is absolutely correct. With us there have been very many zigzags on this road. Every nation must obtain the right to self-determination, and that will make the self-determination of the working people easier.

ANSWERS TO AN AMERICAN JOURNALIST'S QUESTIONS⁶¹

I answer the five questions put to me on condition of the fulfilment of the written promise that my answers will be printed in full in over a hundred newspapers in the United States of America.

1. The governmental programme of the Soviet Government was not a reformist, but a revolutionary one. Reforms are concessions obtained from a ruling class that retains its rule. Revolution is the overthrow of the ruling class. Reformist programmes, therefore, usually consist of many items of partial significance. Our revolutionary programme consisted properly of one general item—removal of the yoke of the landowners and capitalists, the overthrow of their power and the emancipation of the working people from those exploiters. This programme we have never changed. Some partial measures aimed at the realisation of the programme have often been subjected to change; their enumeration would require a whole volume. I will only mention that there is one other general point in our governmental programme which has, perhaps, given rise to the greatest number of changes of partial measures. That point is—the suppression of the exploiters' resistance. After the Revolution of October 25 (November 7), 1917 we did not close down even the bourgeois newspapers and there was no mention of terror at all. We released not only many of Kerensky's ministers, but even Krasnov who had made war on us. It was only after the exploiters, i.e., the capitalists, had begun developing their resistance that we began to crush that resistance systematically, applying

even terror. This was the proletariat's response to such actions of the bourgeoisie as the conspiracy with the capitalists of Germany, Britain, Japan, America and France to restore the rule of the exploiters in Russia, the bribery of the Czechoslovaks with Anglo-French money, the bribery of Mannerheim, Denikin and others with German and French money, etc. One of the latest conspiracies leading to "a change"—to put it precisely, leading to increased terror against the bourgeoisie in Petrograd—was that of the bourgeoisie, acting jointly with the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries; their conspiracy concerned the surrender of Petrograd, the seizure of Krasnaya Gorka by officer-conspirators, the bribing by British and French capitalists of employees of the Swiss Embassy and of many Russian employees, etc.

2. The activities of our Soviet Republic in Afghanistan, India and other Moslem countries outside Russia are the same as our activities among the numerous Moslems and other non-Russian peoples inside Russia. We have made it possible, for instance, for the Bashkirian people to establish an autonomous republic within Russia,⁶² we are doing everything possible to help the independent, free development of every nationality, the growth and dissemination of literature in the native language of each of them, we are translating and propagandising our Soviet Constitution which has the misfortune to be more pleasing to more than a thousand million inhabitants of the earth who belong to colonial, dependent, oppressed, underprivileged nations than the constitutions of the West-European and American bourgeois—"democratic" states that perpetuate private property in land and capital, i.e., strengthen the oppression of the working people of their own countries and of hundreds of millions of people in the colonies of Asia, Africa, etc., by a small number of "civilised" capitalists.

3. As far as the United States and Japan are concerned, our first political objective is to repulse their shameless, criminal, predatory invasion of Russia that serves only to enrich their capitalists. We have many times made solemn proposals of peace to both these countries, but they have not even answered us and continue to make war on us,

helping Denikin and Kolchak, plundering Murmansk and Archangel, ruining and laying waste to, especially, Eastern Siberia, where the Russian peasants are offering heroic resistance⁶³ to the capitalist bandits of Japan and the United States of America.

We have one further political and economic objective in respect of all peoples—including those of the United States and Japan—fraternal alliance with the workers and all working people of all countries without exception.

4. We have, on many occasions, given a precise, clear and written exposition of the terms upon which we agree to conclude peace with Kolchak, Denikin and Mannerheim—for instance to Bullitt⁶⁴ who conducted negotiations with us (and with me personally in Moscow) on behalf of the United States Government, in a letter to Nansen,⁶⁵ etc. It is not our fault that the governments of the United States and other countries are afraid to publish those documents in full and that they hide the truth from the people. I will mention only our basic condition; we are prepared to pay all debts to France and other countries provided there is a real peace and not peace in words alone, i.e., if it is formally signed and ratified by the governments of Great Britain, France, the United States, Japan and Italy—Denikin, Kolchak, Mannerheim and the others being mere pawns in the hands of those governments.

5. More than anything else I should like to state the following to the American public:

Compared to feudalism, capitalism was an historical advance along the road of "liberty", "equality", "democracy" and "civilisation". Nevertheless capitalism was, and remains, a system of *wage-slavery*, of the enslavement of millions of working people, workers and peasants, by an insignificant minority of modern slave-owners, landowners and capitalists. Bourgeois democracy, as compared to feudalism, has changed the form of this economic slavery, has created a brilliant screen for it but has not, and could not, change its essence. Capitalism and bourgeois democracy are *wage-slavery*.

The gigantic progress of technology in general, and of means of transport in particular, and the tremendous growth of capital and banks have resulted in capitalism

becoming mature and overmature. It has outlived itself. It has become the most reactionary hindrance to human progress. It has become reduced to the absolute power of a handful of millionaires and multimillionaires who send whole nations into a bloodbath to decide whether the German or the Anglo-French group of plunderers is to obtain the spoils of imperialism, power over the colonies, financial "spheres of influence" or "mandates to rule", etc.

During the war of 1914-18 tens of millions of people were killed or mutilated for that reason and for that reason alone. Knowledge of this truth is spreading with indomitable force and rapidity among the working people of all countries, the more so because the war has everywhere caused unparalleled ruin, and because interest on war debts has to be paid *everywhere*, even by the "victor" nations. What is this interest? It is a tribute of thousands of millions to the millionaire gentlemen who were kind enough to allow tens of millions of workers and peasants to kill and maim one another to settle the question of the division of profits by the capitalists.

The collapse of capitalism is inevitable. The revolutionary consciousness of the masses is everywhere growing; there are thousands of signs of this. One small sign, unimportant, but impressive to the man in the street is the novels written by Henri Barbusse (*Le Feu, Clarté*) who was a peaceful, modest, law-abiding petty bourgeois, a philistine, a man in the street, when he went to the war.

The capitalists, the bourgeoisie, can at "best" put off the victory of socialism in one country or another at the cost of slaughtering further hundreds of thousands of workers and peasants. But they cannot save capitalism. The *Soviet Republic* has come to take the place of capitalism, the Republic which gives power to the working people and only to the working people, which entrusts the proletariat with the guidance of their liberation, which abolishes private property in land, factories and other means of production, because this private property is the source of the exploitation of the many by the few, the source of mass poverty, the source of predatory wars between nations, wars that enrich only the capitalists.

The victory of the world Soviet Republic is certain.

A brief illustration in conclusion: the American bourgeoisie are deceiving the people by boasting of the liberty, equality and democracy of their country. But neither this nor any other bourgeoisie nor any government in the world can accept, it is afraid to accept, a contest with our government on the basis of real liberty, equality and democracy; let us suppose that an agreement ensured our government and any other government freedom to exchange... pamphlets published in the name of the government in any language and containing the text of the laws of the given country, the text of its constitution, and an explanation of its superiority over the others.

Not one bourgeois government in the world would dare conclude such a peaceful, civilised, free, equal, democratic treaty with us.

Why? Because all of them, with the exception of Soviet governments, keep in power by the oppression and deception of the masses. But the great war of 1914-18 exposed the great deception.

Lenin

July 20, 1919

Pravda No. 162,
July 25, 1919

Collected Works, Vol. 29,
pp. 515-19

TO THE AMERICAN WORKERS

Comrades,

About a year ago, in my letter to the American workers (dated August 20th, 1918) I exposed to you the situation in Soviet Russia and the problems facing the latter. That was before the German revolution. The events which since took place in the world's history proved how right the Bolsheviks were in their estimation of the imperialist war of 1914-18 in general and of the Entente imperialism in particular. As for the Soviet power it has become familiar and dear to the minds and hearts of the working masses of the whole world. Everywhere the working people, in spite of the influence of the old leaders with their chauvinism and opportunism penetrating them through and through, become aware of the rottenness of the bourgeois parliaments and of the necessity of the Soviet power, the power of the working people, the dictatorship of the proletariat, for the sake of the emancipation of humanity from the yoke of capital. And Soviet power will win in the whole world, however furiously, however frantically the bourgeoisie of all countries rages and storms. The bourgeoisie inundates Russia with blood, waging war upon us and inciting against us the counter-revolutionaries, those who wish the yoke of capital to be restored. The bourgeoisie inflicts upon the working masses of Russia unprecedented sufferings through the blockade and through the help it gives to counter-revolution, but we have already

defeated Kolchak and we are carrying on the war against Denikin with the firm assurance of our coming victory.

N. Lenin

September 23, 1919

* * *

I am often asked whether those American opponents of the war against Russia—not only workers, but mainly bourgeois—are right, who expect from us, after peace is concluded, not only resumption of trade relations, but also the possibility of receiving concessions in Russia. I repeat once more that they are right. A durable peace would be such a relief to the working people of Russia that they would undoubtedly agree to certain concessions being granted. The granting of concessions under reasonable terms is desirable also for us, as one of the means of attracting into Russia, during the period of the coexistence side by side of socialist and capitalist states, the technical help of the countries which are more advanced in this respect.

N. Lenin

September 23, 1919

Published in English
on December 27, 1919 in the
magazine *Soviet Russia* No. 30

First published in Russian
in *Pravda* No. 308,
November 7, 1930

Collected Works, Vol. 30,
pp. 38-39

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS
PUT BY A *CHICAGO DAILY NEWS*
CORRESPONDENT**

October 5, 1919

I beg to apologise for my bad English. I am glad to answer your few questions.

1. What is the present policy of the Soviet Government on the question of peace?
2. What, in general outline, are the peace terms put forward by Soviet Russia?

Our peace policy is the former, that is, we have accepted the peace proposition of Mr. Bullitt. We have never changed our peace conditions (question 2), which are formulated with Mr. Bullitt.

We have many times officially proposed peace to the Entente before coming of Mr. Bullitt.

3. Is the Soviet Government prepared to guarantee absolute non-intervention in the internal affairs of foreign states?

We are willing to guarantee it.

4. Is the Soviet Government prepared to prove that it represents the majority of the Russian people?

Yes, the Soviet Government is the most democratic government of all governments in the world. We are willing to prove it.

5. What is the position of the Soviet Government in respect of an economic understanding with America?

We are decidedly for an economic understanding with America—with all countries but *especially* with America.

If necessary we can give you the full text of our peace conditions as formulated by our government with Mr. Bullitt.

Wl. Oulianoff (N. Lenin)

Published in the *Chicago Daily News* No. 257,
October 27, 1919

First published in Russian in 1942

Collected Works, Vol. 30,
pp. 50-51

**ADDRESS TO THE SECOND ALL-RUSSIA
CONGRESS OF COMMUNIST ORGANISATIONS
OF THE PEOPLES OF THE EAST⁶⁶**
NOVEMBER 22, 1919

Comrades, I am very glad of the opportunity to greet this Congress of Communist comrades representing Moslem organisations of the East, and to say a few words about the situation now obtaining in Russia and throughout the world. The subject of my address is current affairs, and it seems to me that the most essential aspects of this question at present are the attitude of the peoples of the East to imperialism, and the revolutionary movement among those peoples. It is self-evident that this revolutionary movement of the peoples of the East can now develop effectively, can reach a successful issue, only in direct association with the revolutionary struggle of our Soviet Republic against international imperialism. Owing to a number of circumstances, among them the backwardness of Russia and her vast area, and the fact that she constitutes a frontier between Europe and Asia, between the West and the East, we had to bear the whole brunt—and we regard that as a great honour—of being the pioneers of the world struggle against imperialism. Consequently, the whole course of development in the immediate future presages a still broader and more strenuous struggle against international imperialism, and will inevitably be linked with the struggle of the Soviet Republic against the forces of united imperialism—of Germany, France, Britain and the U.S.A.

As regards the military aspect of the matter, you know how favourable our situation now is on all the fronts. I shall not dwell in detail on this question; I shall only say that the Civil War which was forced upon us by international imperialism has in two years inflicted incalculable hardship upon the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic, and imposed upon the peasants and workers a burden so intolerable that it often seemed they would not be able to endure it. But at the same time, because of its brute violence, because of the ruthlessly brutal onslaught of our so-called allies, turned wild beasts, who robbed us even before the socialist revolution, this war has performed a miracle and turned people weary of fighting and seemingly incapable of bearing another war into warriors who have not only withstood the war for two years but are bringing it to a victorious end. The victories we are now gaining over Kolchak, Yudenich and Denikin signify the advent of a new phase in the history of the struggle of world imperialism against the countries and nations which have risen up to fight for their emancipation. In this respect, the two years of our Civil War have fully confirmed what has long been known to history—that the character of a war and its success depend chiefly upon the internal regime of the country that goes to war, that war is a reflection of the internal policy conducted by the given country before the war. All this is inevitably reflected in the prosecution of a war.

Which class waged the war, and is continuing to wage it, is a very important question. Only due to our Civil War being waged by workers and peasants who have emancipated themselves, and to its being a continuation of the political struggle for the emancipation of the working people from the capitalists of their own country and of the whole world—only thanks to this were people to be found in such a backward country as Russia, worn out as she was by four years of imperialist war, who were strong-willed enough to carry on that war during two years of incredible and unparalleled hardship and difficulty.

This was very strikingly illustrated in the history of the Civil War in the case of Kolchak. Kolchak was an enemy who had the assistance of all the world's strongest

Powers; he had a railway which was protected by some hundred thousand foreign troops, including the finest troops of the world imperialists, such as the Japanese, for example, who had been trained for the imperialist war, but took practically no part in it and therefore suffered little; Kolchak had the backing of the Siberian peasants, who were the most prosperous and had never known serfdom, and therefore, naturally, were farthest of all from communism. It seemed that Kolchak was an invincible force, because his troops were the advance guard of international imperialism. To this day, Japanese and Czechoslovak troops and the troops of a number of other imperialist nations are operating in Siberia. Nevertheless, the more than a year's experience of Kolchak's rule over Siberia and her vast natural resources, which was at first supported by the socialist parties of the Second International, by the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries, who set up the Constituent Assembly Committee⁶⁷ front, and which therefore, under these conditions, from the standpoint of the man in the street and of the ordinary course of history, appeared to be firm and invincible—that experience actually revealed the following. The farther Kolchak advanced into the heart of Russia, the more he wore himself out, and in the end we have witnessed Soviet Russia's complete triumph over Kolchak. Here we undoubtedly have practical proof that the united forces of workers and peasants who have been emancipated from the capitalist yoke can perform real miracles. Here we have practical proof that when a revolutionary war really does attract and interest the working and oppressed people, when it makes them conscious that they are fighting the exploiters—such a revolutionary war engenders the strength and ability to perform miracles.

I think that what the Red Army has accomplished, its struggle, and the history of its victory, will be of colossal, epochal significance for all the peoples of the East. It will show them that, weak as they may be, and invincible as may seem the power of the European oppressors, who in the struggle employ all the marvels of technology and of the military art—nevertheless, a revolutionary war waged by oppressed peoples, if it really succeeds in arousing the

millions of working and exploited people, harbours such potentialities, such miracles, that the emancipation of the peoples of the East is now quite practicable, from the standpoint not only of the prospects of the international revolution, but also of the direct military experience acquired in Asia, in Siberia, the experience of the Soviet Republic, which has suffered the armed invasion of all the powerful imperialist countries.

Furthermore, the experience of the Civil War in Russia has shown us and the Communists of all countries that, in the crucible of civil war, the development of revolutionary enthusiasm is accompanied by a powerful inner cohesion. War tests all the economic and organisational forces of a nation. In the final analysis, infinitely hard as the war has been for the workers and peasants, who are suffering famine and cold, it may be said on the basis of these two years' experience that we are winning and will continue to win, because we have a hinterland, and a strong one, because, despite famine and cold, the peasants and workers stand together, have grown strong, and answer every heavy blow with a greater cohesion of their forces and increased economic might. And it is this alone that has made possible the victories over Kolchak, Yudenich and their allies, the strongest powers in the world. The past two years have shown, on the one hand, that a revolutionary war can be developed, and, on the other hand, that the Soviet system is growing stronger under the heavy blows of the foreign invasion, the aim of which is to destroy quickly the revolutionary centre, the republic of workers and peasants who have dared to declare war on international imperialism. But instead of destroying the workers and peasants of Russia, these heavy blows have served to harden them.

That is the chief lesson, the chief content of the present period. We are on the eve of decisive victories over Denikin, the last enemy left on our soil. We feel strong and may reiterate a thousand times over that we are not mistaken when we say that internally the Republic has become consolidated, and that we shall emerge from the war against Denikin very much stronger and better prepared for the task of erecting the socialist edifice—to which we

have been able to devote all too little time and energy during the Civil War, but to which, now that we are setting foot on a free road, we shall undoubtedly be able to devote ourselves entirely.

In Western Europe we see the decay of imperialism. You know that a year ago it seemed even to the German socialists, and to the vast majority of socialists—who did not understand the state of affairs—that what was in progress was a struggle of two world imperialist groups, and they believed that this struggle constituted the whole of history, that there was no force capable of producing anything else. It seemed to them that even socialists had no alternative but to join sides with one of the groups of powerful world predators. That is how it seemed at the close of October 1918. But we find that in the year that has since elapsed world history has witnessed unparalleled events, profound and far-reaching events, and these have opened the eyes of many socialists who during the imperialist war were patriots and justified their conduct on the plea that they were faced with an enemy; they justified their alliance with the British and French imperialists on the grounds that these were supposedly bringing delivery from German imperialism. See how many illusions were shattered by that war! We are witnessing the decay of German imperialism, a decay which has led not only to a republican, but even to a socialist revolution. You know that in Germany today the class struggle has become still more acute and that civil war is drawing nearer and nearer—a war of the German proletariat against the German imperialists, who have adopted republican colours, but who remain imperialists.

Everyone knows that the social revolution is maturing in Western Europe by leaps and bounds, and that the same thing is happening in America and in Britain, the countries ostensibly representing culture and civilisation, victors over the Huns, the German imperialists. Yet when it came to the Treaty of Versailles, everyone saw that it was a hundred times more rapacious than the Treaty of Brest which the German robbers forced upon us, and that it was the heaviest blow the capitalists and imperialists of those luckless victor countries could possibly have struck at

themselves. The Treaty of Versailles opened the eyes of the people of the victor nations, and showed that in the case of Britain and France, even though they are democratic states, we have before us not representatives of culture and civilisation, but countries ruled by imperialist predators. The internal struggle among these predators is developing so swiftly that we may rejoice in the knowledge that the Treaty of Versailles is only a seeming victory for the jubilant imperialists, and that in reality it signifies the bankruptcy of the entire imperialist world and the resolute abandonment by the working people of those socialists who during the war allied themselves with the representatives of decaying imperialism and defended one of the groups of belligerent predators. The eyes of the working people have been opened because the Treaty of Versailles was a rapacious peace and showed that France and Britain had actually fought Germany in order to strengthen their rule over the colonies and to enhance their imperialist might. That internal struggle grows broader as time goes on. Today I saw a wireless message from London dated November 21, in which American journalists—men who cannot be suspected of sympathising with revolutionaries—say that in France an unprecedented outburst of hatred towards the Americans is to be observed, because the Americans refuse to ratify the Treaty of Versailles.

Britain and France are victors, but they are up to their ears in debt to America, who has decided that the French and the British may consider themselves victors as much as they like, but that she is going to skim the cream and exact usurious interest for her assistance during the war; and the guarantee of this is to be the American Navy which is now being built and is overtaking the British Navy in size. And the crudeness of the Americans' rapacious imperialism may be seen from the fact that American agents are buying white slaves, women and girls, and shipping them to America for the development of prostitution. Just think, free, cultured America supplying white slaves for brothels! Conflicts with American agents are occurring in Poland and Belgium. That is a tiny illustration of what is taking place on a vast scale in every little country which received assistance from the Entente. Take Poland, for

instance. You find American agents and profiteers going there and buying up all the wealth of Poland, who boasts that she is now an independent power. Poland is being bought up by American agents. There is not a factory or branch of industry which is not in the pockets of the Americans. The Americans have become so brazen that they are beginning to enslave that "great and free victor", France, who was formerly a country of usurers, but is now deep in debt to America, because she has lost her economic strength, and has not enough grain or coal of her own and cannot develop her material resources on a large scale, while America insists that the tribute be paid unreservedly and in full. It is thus becoming increasingly apparent that France, Britain and other powerful countries are economically bankrupt. In the French elections the Clericals have gained the upper hand. The French people, who were deceived into devoting all their strength supposedly to the defence of freedom and democracy against Germany, have now been rewarded with an interminable debt, with the sneers of the rapacious American imperialists and, on top of it, with a Clerical majority consisting of representatives of the most savage reaction.

The situation all over the world has become immeasurably more complicated. Our victory over Kolchak and Yudenich, those lackeys of international capital, is a big one; but far bigger, though not so evident, is the victory we are gaining on an international scale. That victory consists in the internal decay of imperialism, which is unable to send its troops against us. The Entente tried it, but to no purpose, because its troops become demoralised when they contact our troops and acquaint themselves with our Russian Soviet Constitution, translated into their languages. Despite the influence of the leaders of putrid socialism, our Constitution will always win the sympathy of the working people. The word "Soviet" is now understood by everybody, and the Soviet Constitution has been translated into all languages and is known to every worker. He knows that it is the constitution of working people, the political system of working people who are calling for victory over international capital, that it is a triumph we have achieved over the international imperialists. This victory of ours

has had its repercussions in all imperialist countries, since we have deprived them of their own troops, won them over, deprived them of the possibility of using those troops against Soviet Russia.

They tried to wage war with the troops of other countries—Finland, Poland, and Latvia—but nothing came of it. British Minister Churchill, speaking in the House of Commons several weeks ago, boasted—and it was cabled all over the world—that a campaign of fourteen nations against Soviet Russia had been organised, and that this would result in victory over Russia by the New Year. And it is true that many nations participated in it—Finland, the Ukraine, Poland, Georgia, as well as the Czechoslovaks, the Japanese, the French, the British, and the Germans. But we know what came of it! We know that the Estonians left Yudenich's forces in the lurch; and now a fierce controversy is going on in the press because the Estonians do not want to help him, while Finland, much as her bourgeoisie wanted it, has not assisted Yudenich either. Thus the second attempt to attack us has likewise failed. The first stage was the dispatch by the Entente of its own troops, equipped according to all the rules of military technique, so that it seemed they would defeat the Soviet Republic. They have already withdrawn from the Caucasus, Archangel and the Crimea; they still remain in Murmansk, as the Czechoslovaks do in Siberia, but only as isolated groups. The first attempt of the Entente to defeat us with its own forces ended in victory for us. The second attempt consisted in launching against us nations which are our neighbours, and which are entirely dependent financially on the Entente, and in trying to force them to crush us, as a nest of socialism. But that attempt, too, ended in failure: it turned out that not one of these little countries is capable of waging such a war. What is more, hatred of the Entente has taken firm root in every little country. If Finland did not set out to capture Petrograd when Yudenich had already captured Krasnoye Selo, it was because she hesitated, realising that she could live independently side by side with Soviet Russia, but could not live in peace with the Entente. All little nations have felt that. It is felt in Finland, Lithuania, Estonia, and Po-

land, where chauvinism is rampant, but where there is hatred of the Entente, which is expanding its exploitation in those countries. And now, accurately assessing the course of developments, we may say without exaggeration that not only the first, but also the second stage of the international war against the Soviet Republic has failed. All that remains for us to do now is to defeat Denikin's forces, and they are already half-defeated.

Such is the present Russian and international situation, which I have summarised briefly in my address. Permit me, in conclusion, to say something about the situation that is developing in respect of the nationalities of the East. You are representatives of the communist organisations and Communist Parties of various Eastern peoples. I must say that the Russian Bolsheviks have succeeded in forcing a breach in the old imperialism, in undertaking the exceedingly difficult, but also exceedingly noble task of blazing new paths of revolution, whereas you, the representatives of the working people of the East, have before you a task that is still greater and newer. It is becoming quite clear that the socialist revolution which is impending for the whole world will not be merely the victory of the proletariat of each country over its own bourgeoisie. That would be possible if revolutions came easily and swiftly. We know that the imperialists will not allow this, that all countries are armed against their domestic Bolshevism and that their one thought is how to defeat Bolshevism at home. That is why in every country a civil war is brewing in which the old socialist compromisers are enlisted on the side of the bourgeoisie. Hence, the socialist revolution will not be solely, or chiefly, a struggle of the revolutionary proletarians in each country against their bourgeoisie—no, it will be a struggle of all the imperialist-oppressed colonies and countries, of all dependent countries, against international imperialism. Characterising the approach of the world social revolution in the Party Programme we adopted last March, we said that the civil war of the working people against the imperialists and exploiters in all the advanced countries is beginning to be combined with national wars against international imperialism. That is confirmed by the course of the revolution,

and will be more and more confirmed as time goes on. It will be the same in the East.

We know that in the East the masses will rise as independent participants, as builders of a new life, because hundreds of millions of the people belong to dependent, underprivileged nations, which until now have been objects of international imperialist policy, and have only existed as material to fertilise capitalist culture and civilisation. And when they talk of handing out mandates for colonies, we know very well that it means handing out mandates for spoliation and plunder—handing out to an insignificant section of the world's population the right to exploit the majority of the population of the globe. That majority, which up till then had been completely outside the orbit of historical progress, because it could not constitute an independent revolutionary force, ceased, as we know, to play such a passive role at the beginning of the twentieth century. We know that 1905 was followed by revolutions in Turkey, Persia and China, and that a revolutionary movement developed in India. The imperialist war likewise contributed to the growth of the revolutionary movement, because the European imperialists had to enlist whole colonial regiments in their struggle. The imperialist war aroused the East also and drew its peoples into international politics. Britain and France armed colonial peoples and helped them to familiarise themselves with military technique and up-to-date machines. That knowledge they will use against the imperialist gentry. The period of the awakening of the East in the contemporary revolution is being succeeded by a period in which all the Eastern peoples will participate in deciding the destiny of the whole world, so as not to be simply objects of the enrichment of others. The peoples of the East are becoming alive to the need for practical action, the need for every nation to take part in shaping the destiny of all mankind.

That is why I think that in the history of the development of the world revolution—which, judging by its beginning, will continue for many years and will demand much effort—that in the revolutionary struggle, in the revolutionary movement you will be called upon to play a big part and to merge with our struggle against interna-

tional imperialism. Your participation in the international revolution will confront you with a complicated and difficult task, the accomplishment of which will serve as the foundation for our common success, because here the majority of the people for the first time begin to act independently and will be an active factor in the fight to overthrow international imperialism.

Most of the Eastern peoples are in a worse position than the most backward country in Europe—Russia. But in our struggle against feudal survivals and capitalism, we succeeded in uniting the peasants and workers of Russia; and it was because the peasants and workers united against capitalism and feudalism that our victory was so easy. Here contact with the peoples of the East is particularly important, because the majority of the Eastern peoples are typical representatives of the working people—not workers who have passed through the school of capitalist factories, but typical representatives of the working and exploited peasant masses who are victims of medieval oppression. The Russian revolution showed how the proletarians, after defeating capitalism and uniting with the vast diffuse mass of working peasants, rose up victoriously against medieval oppression. Our Soviet Republic must now muster all the awakening peoples of the East and, together with them, wage a struggle against international imperialism.

In this respect you are confronted with a task which has not previously confronted the Communists of the world: relying upon the general theory and practice of communism, you must adapt yourselves to specific conditions such as do not exist in the European countries; you must be able to apply that theory and practice to conditions in which the bulk of the population are peasants, and in which the task is to wage a struggle against medieval survivals and not against capitalism. That is a difficult and specific task, but a very thankful one, because masses that have taken no part in the struggle up to now are being drawn into it, and also because the organisation of communist cells in the East gives you an opportunity to maintain the closest contact with the Third International. You must find specific forms for this alliance

of the foremost proletarians of the world with the labouring and exploited masses of the East whose conditions are in many cases medieval. We have accomplished on a small scale in our country what you will do on a big scale and in big countries. And that latter task you will, I hope, perform with success. Thanks to the communist organisations in the East, of which you here are the representatives, you have contact with the advanced revolutionary proletariat. Your task is to continue to ensure that communist propaganda is carried on in every country in a language the people understand.

It is self-evident that final victory can be won only by the proletariat of all the advanced countries of the world, and we, the Russians, are beginning the work which the British, French or German proletariat will consolidate. But we see that they will not be victorious without the aid of the working people of all the oppressed colonial nations, first and foremost, of Eastern nations. We must realise that the transition to communism cannot be accomplished by the vanguard alone. The task is to arouse the working masses to revolutionary activity, to independent action and to organisation, regardless of the level they have reached; to translate the true communist doctrine, which was intended for the Communists of the more advanced countries, into the language of every people; to carry out those practical tasks which must be carried out immediately, and to join the proletarians of other countries in a common struggle.

Such are the problems whose solution you will not find in any communist book, but will find in the common struggle begun by Russia. You will have to tackle that problem and solve it through your own independent experience. In that you will be assisted, on the one hand, by close alliance with the vanguard of the working people of other countries, and, on the other, by ability to find the right approach to the peoples of the East whom you here represent. You will have to base yourselves on the bourgeois nationalism which is awakening, and must awaken, among those peoples, and which has its historical justification. At the same time, you must find your way to the working and exploited masses of every country and tell them in a language

they understand that their only hope of emancipation lies in the victory of the international revolution, and that the international proletariat is the only ally of all the hundreds of millions of the working and exploited peoples of the East.

Such is the immense task which confronts you, and which, thanks to the era of revolution and the growth of the revolutionary movement—of that there can be no doubt—will, by the joint efforts of the communist organisations of the East, be successfully accomplished and crowned by complete victory over international imperialism.

*Bulletin of the C.C.,
R.C.P. (B.) No. 9,
December 20, 1919*

*Collected Works, Vol. 30,
pp. 151-62*

EIGHTH ALL-RUSSIA CONFERENCE OF THE R.C.P.(B.)

DECEMBER 2-4, 1919

DRAFT RESOLUTION ON FOREIGN POLICY⁶⁸

The Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic wishes to live in peace with all peoples and devote all its efforts to internal development so as to put production, transport and government affairs in order on the basis of the Soviet system; this has so far been prevented by the intervention of the Entente and the starvation blockade.

The workers' and peasants' government has made repeated peace proposals to the Entente powers—the message from the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs to the American representative, Mr. Poole, on August 5, 1918; to President Wilson on October 24, 1918; to all Entente governments through representatives of neutral countries on November 3, 1918; a message from the Sixth All-Russia Congress of Soviets on November 7, 1918; Litvinov's Note in Stockholm to all Entente representatives on December 23, 1918; then there were the messages of January 12, January 17 and February 4, 1919, and the draft treaty drawn up jointly with Bullitt on March 12, 1919; and a message through Nansen on May 7, 1919.

The Seventh Congress of Soviets fully approves these many steps taken by the Council of People's Commissars and the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, once more confirms its lasting desire for peace and again proposes to the Entente powers, Britain, France, the United States of America, Italy and Japan, individually and collectively, to begin immediately negotiations on peace; the Congress instructs the All-Russia Central Executive Com-

mittee, the Council of People's Commissars and the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs to continue this peace policy systematically (or: to continue this peace policy systematically, taking all appropriate measures to ensure its success).

Written on December 2, 1919
First published in 1932

Collected Works, Vol. 30,
pp. 191-92

SEVENTH ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS OF SOVIETS⁶⁹

DECEMBER 5-9, 1919

FROM THE REPORT OF THE ALL-RUSSIA CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND THE COUNCIL OF PEOPLE'S COMMISSARS DECEMBER 5

When speaking of the political results and lessons of our activities, the Soviet Republic's international position naturally takes first place. Both prior to October and during the October Revolution, we always said that we regard ourselves and can only regard ourselves as one of the contingents of the international proletarian army, a contingent which came to the fore, not because of its level of development and preparedness, but because of Russia's exceptional conditions; we always said that the victory of the socialist revolution, therefore, can only be regarded as final when it becomes the victory of the proletariat in at least several advanced countries. It was in this respect that we experienced the greatest difficulties.

Our banking on the world revolution, if you can call it that, has on the whole been fully justified. But from the point of view of the speed of its development we have endured an exceptionally difficult period; we have seen for ourselves that the revolution's development in more advanced countries has proved to be considerably slower, considerably more difficult, considerably more complicated. This should not surprise us for it was naturally easier for a country such as Russia to start a socialist revolution than it is for the advanced countries. But, in any case, this slower, more complicated, more zigzag development of the socialist revolution in Western Europe has burdened

us with incredible difficulties. The question that primarily comes to mind is: how was it possible for such a miracle to have occurred, for Soviet power to have held out for two years in a backward, ruined and war-weary country, in the face of the stubborn struggle waged against it first by German imperialism, which at that time was considered omnipotent, and then by Entente imperialism, which a year ago settled accounts with Germany, had no rivals and lorded it over all the countries on earth? From the point of view of a simple calculation of the forces involved, from the point of view of a military assessment of these forces, it really is a miracle, because the Entente was and continues to be immeasurably stronger than we are. Nevertheless, the year under review is noteworthy most of all for our having won a tremendous victory, so great a victory that I think we may say without exaggeration that our *main difficulties are already behind us*. No matter how great the dangers and difficulties in store for us, the main ones are evidently behind us. We must understand the reasons for this, and, what is most important, must correctly determine our future policy, since the future will almost certainly bring many further attempts by the Entente at intervention, and possibly a rebirth of the previous predatory alliance between international and Russian capitalists to restore the power of the landowners and capitalists, to overthrow Soviet rule in Russia, in short, an alliance pursuing the old aim of extinguishing the centre of the world socialist conflagration—the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic.

Examining the history of the Entente intervention and its political lesson for us from this point of view, I would say that it could be divided into three main stages, each of which has successively given us full and lasting victory.

The first stage, naturally the most convenient and easiest for the Entente countries, involved their attempt to settle matters with Soviet Russia by using their own troops. Of course, after the Entente countries had defeated Germany they had armies of millions of men who had not yet openly declared for peace and who did not immediately recover from the fright given them by the bogey of German imperialism, which had been used to scare

them in all the Western countries. At that time, of course, from the military point of view, and from the point of view of foreign policy, it would have been easy for the Entente countries to take a tenth part of their armies and dispatch them to Russia. Note that they completely dominated at sea, that they had complete naval supremacy. Troop transportation and supplies were always completely under their control. Had the Entente countries, who hated us as only the bourgeoisie can hate the socialist revolution, then been able to fling even a tenth part of their armies against us with any success, there cannot be the slightest doubt that Soviet Russia would have been doomed and would have met the same fate as Hungary.

Why did the Entente countries fail to achieve this? They landed troops in Murmansk. The drive into Siberia was undertaken with the aid of Entente troops, and Japanese troops continue to hold a distant slice of Eastern Siberia, while there were military units, even if not big ones, from all the Entente states in all parts of Western Siberia. Then French troops were landed in the South of Russia. That was the first stage of international intervention in our affairs, the first attempt, so to speak, to crush the Soviets with troops from the Entente's own countries, i.e., with the aid of workers and peasants of the more advanced countries, who were splendidly equipped; generally speaking the Entente countries lacked nothing in the way of technical and material means for the campaign. There were no obstacles confronting them. How, then, are we to explain the failure of that attempt? It ended in the Entente countries having to withdraw their troops, because they proved incapable of waging a struggle against revolutionary Soviet Russia. That, comrades, has always been our main and principal argument. From the very outset of the revolution we have said that we constitute a party of the international proletariat, and that, however great the difficulties facing the revolution, there would come a time when, at the most decisive moment, the sympathy, the solidarity of the workers oppressed by international imperialism would make itself felt. For this we were accused of being utopians. But experience has shown that while we cannot always and in all cases rely on action by the pro-

letariat, at any rate we may say that during these two years of the world's history we have been proved correct a thousand times. The attempt by the British and French to crush Soviet Russia with their own troops, an attempt that promised them certain and very easy success in a minimum of time, ended in failure: the British troops have left Archangel, and the French troops that had landed in the South have all been sent home. Despite the blockade, despite the ring drawn around us, news does reach us from Western Europe, we do get British and French newspapers, even if only sporadically, from which we learn that letters sent by British soldiers from Archangel Region have somehow reached Britain and been published there. We know that the name of the Frenchwoman, Comrade Jeanne Labourbe, who engaged in communist activity among French soldiers and workers and was shot in Odessa, became known to the entire French proletariat and became a battle-cry, a name around which all French workers united for action against international imperialism despite the apparently insurmountable factional trends of syndicalism. The words of Comrade Radek, who fortunately, as today's reports state, has been liberated by Germany and whom we shall perhaps see soon, that the soil of Russia, aflame with the fire of revolution, would prove inaccessible to the Entente troops—these words, which seemed to be just a writer's flight of fancy, were actually realised. Despite all our backwardness, despite all the burden of our struggle, the troops of Britain and France proved incapable of fighting us on our own soil. The result was a victory for us. The first time that they tried to send massive military forces against us—and without them victory is impossible—the only result was that, thanks to their correct class instinct, the French and British soldiers brought home from Russia the very ulcer of Bolshevism that the German imperialists were fighting when they expelled our envoys from Berlin. They thought they would protect themselves in this way against the ulcer of Bolshevism, which now spreads over the whole of Germany in the shape of a strengthened labour movement. The victory we won in compelling the evacuation of the British and French troops was the greatest of our victo-

ries over the Entente countries. We deprived them of their soldiers. Our response to the unlimited military and technical superiority of the Entente countries was to deprive them of it through the solidarity of the working people against the imperialist governments.

This revealed how superficial and uncertain it is to judge these so-called democratic countries by accepted criteria. Their parliaments have stable bourgeois majorities. This they call "democracy". Capital dominates and weighs down everything and they still resort to military censorship. And they call that "democracy". Among the millions of copies of their newspapers and magazines you would be hard put to find any but an insignificant few that contain even a hint of anything favourable about the Bolsheviks. That is why they say: "We are protected against the Bolsheviks, there is order in our countries", and they call it "democracy". How could it happen that a small section of British soldiers and French sailors were able to compel the withdrawal of the Entente troops from Russia? There is something wrong here. It means that even in Britain, France and America the mass of the people are for us; it means that all these external features, as socialists who refuse to betray socialism have always asserted, are a deception; it means that the bourgeois parliamentary system, bourgeois democracy, bourgeois freedom of the press are merely freedom for the capitalists, freedom to bribe public opinion, to exert pressure on it by all the power of money. That is what socialists always said until the imperialist war scattered them to their national camps and turned each national group of socialists into lackeys of their own bourgeoisie. That was said by socialists before the war, that was always said by the internationalists and Bolsheviks during the war—and it all proved to be absolutely correct. All the external features, all the window-dressings, are a fraud; and this is becoming increasingly obvious to the people. They all shout about democracy, but in no parliament in the world did they dare to say that they were declaring war on Soviet Russia. That is why we read in the numerous French, British and American publications now available the proposal to "place the heads of state in the dock for having violated the Constitution,

for waging war on Russia without declaring war". When and where was it sanctioned, what article of the Constitution, what parliament sanctioned it? Where did they gather their parliamentary representatives together, even after taking the precaution to imprison all Bolsheviks and near-Bolsheviks, to use the expression of the French press? Even under those conditions they did not dare to state in their parliaments that they were fighting Russia. That was why the splendidly armed, previously undefeated troops of Britain and France were unable to defeat us and departed from Archangel Region in the North, and from the South.

That was our first and chief victory, because it was not only a military victory, it was not really a military victory at all—it was actually a victory of that international solidarity of the working people for which we began the whole revolution, and which we pointed to and said that, however numerous the trials we would have to undergo, all these sacrifices would be repaid a hundredfold by the development of the world revolution, which is inevitable. It was apparent from the fact that in the sphere where the grossest material factors play the greatest part, namely, in the military sphere, we defeated the Entente countries by depriving them of the workers and peasants in soldiers' uniforms.

The first victory was followed by the second period of Entente intervention in our affairs. Each nation is headed by a group of politicians who possess wonderful experience, and that is why, after losing this stake, they placed another, taking advantage of their dominant position in the world. There is not a single country, not a single bit of the earth's surface, which is not in fact totally dominated by British, French and American finance capital. That was the basis for the new attempt they made, namely, to compel the small countries surrounding Russia, many of which had been liberated and had been able to declare themselves independent only during the war—Poland, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, the Ukraine, etc.—to compel these small states to go to war against Russia on British, French and American money.

You may remember, comrades, that our newspapers

reported a speech by Churchill, the well-known British Cabinet Minister, in which he said that 14 states would attack Russia and that September would see the fall of Petrograd, and December that of Moscow. I heard that Churchill then disclaimed this report, but it was taken from the Swedish *Folkets Dagblad-Politiken* of August 25. But even if this source proved unreliable we know full well that Churchill and the British imperialists acted precisely in this way. We are perfectly well aware that everything was done to exert pressure on Finland, Estonia and other small countries, in order to persuade them to wage war on Soviet Russia. I happened to read a leading article in *The Times*, the most influential bourgeois newspaper in Britain, a leader written when Yudenich's troops, obviously supplied, equipped and conveyed on board Entente transports, were a few versts from Petrograd, and Detskoye Selo had been taken. The article was a veritable onslaught, in which the maximum pressure was exerted—military, diplomatic and historical. British capital flung itself on Finland and faced her with an ultimatum: The eyes of the whole world are on Finland, said the British capitalists, the entire fate of Finland depends on whether she understands her role, whether she will help to crush the filthy, dirty, bloody wave of Bolshevism and liberate Russia. And in return for this "great and moral" work, for this "noble, civilised" work, Finland was promised so many million pounds, such-and-such a piece of territory, and such-and-such benefits. And what was the result? There was a time when Yudenich's troops were a few versts away from Petrograd, when Denikin stood to the north of Orel, when the slightest assistance to them would have quickly settled the fate of Petrograd to the advantage of our enemies, in a minimum of time and at negligible cost.

The entire pressure of the Entente countries was brought to bear on Finland, a country that is up to its neck in debt to them. And not only in debt: Finland cannot carry on for one month without the aid of these countries. But how did the "miracle" of our having won the battle against such an enemy happen? And win it we did. Finland did not enter the war, Yudenich was defeated, so was

Denikin, and that at a time when joint action by them would most surely, most swiftly have settled the whole struggle to the advantage of international capitalism. We won the battle with international imperialism in this most serious and desperate trial of strength. But how did we do it? How could such a "miracle" have taken place? It took place because the Entente backed the same card as all capitalist states, which operate wholly and solely by deception and pressure; that was why everything they did aroused such resistance that the result was to our advantage. We were very poorly armed, worn out, and we said to the Finnish workers, whom the Finnish bourgeoisie had crushed, "You must not fight against us". The Entente countries appeared strong in their armaments, with all their outward might, with the food they were in a position to supply to these countries, and demanded that they fight against us. We won this battle. We won because the Entente countries had no troops of their own to fling against us, they had to resort to the forces of the small nations, but here, not only the workers and peasants, but even the considerable section of that very bourgeoisie that had crushed the working class did not in the end go against us.

When the Entente imperialists spoke of democracy and independence, these nations had the impudence from the Entente viewpoint, and foolishness from our viewpoint, to take these promises seriously and to understand independence as really implying independence, and not a means of enriching the British and French capitalists. They thought that democracy meant living as free men, and not that all American multimillionaires would be able to plunder their country, or that every tinpot aristocrat of an officer should be able to behave like a swine and turn into a brazen blackmarketeer prepared, for the sake of a few hundred per cent profit, to do the filthiest of jobs. That was how we won! The Entente encountered opposition to its pressure on these small countries, on each of these 14 countries. The Finnish bourgeoisie who employed White Terror to crush tens of thousands of Finnish workers know that this will not be forgotten, and that the German bayonets that made it possible no longer exist—these Finnish bourgeois hate the Bolsheviks as intensely

as an exploiter would hate the workers who kicked him out. Nevertheless the Finnish bourgeoisie said to themselves. "If we follow the instructions of the Entente, that means we shall undoubtedly lose all hope of independence." And this independence was given to them by the Bolsheviks in November 1917, when Finland had a bourgeois government. The attitude of wide sections of the Finnish bourgeoisie, therefore, proved to be one of vacillation. We won the battle with the Entente countries because they counted on the small nations and at the same time repelled them.

This experience confirms, on an enormous, global scale, what we have always said. There are two forces on earth that can decide the destiny of mankind. One force is international capitalism, and should it be victorious it will display this force in countless atrocities as may be seen from the history of every small nation's development. The other force is the international proletariat that is fighting for the socialist revolution through the dictatorship of the proletariat, which it calls workers' democracy. Neither the vacillating elements here in Russia, nor the bourgeoisie of the small countries believed us; they called us utopians or bandits or even worse, for there is no stupid and monstrous accusation that they will not fling at us. But when they faced up squarely to the issue of either going with the Entente countries and helping them to crush the Bolsheviks, or of helping the Bolsheviks by neutrality, we proved to have won the battle and to have got that neutrality. We had no treaties, whereas Britain, France and America had all sorts of promissory notes, all sorts of treaties; nevertheless the small nations did as we wanted them to; they did so not because the Polish, Finnish, Lithuanian or Latvian bourgeoisie derived satisfaction from conducting their policy in a way that suited the Bolsheviks—that, of course, is nonsense—but because our definition of the historical forces involved was correct, namely, that either brute capital would be victorious, and then, even if it were in the most democratic republic, it would crush all the small nations of the world—or the dictatorship of the proletariat would be victorious, which is the sole hope of all working people and of the small,

downtrodden and weak nations. It turned out that we were right not only in theory, but also in practical world politics. When this battle for the troops of Finland and Estonia took place we won it, although they could have crushed us with insignificant forces. We won the battle despite the Entente countries having thrown the enormous weight of their financial pressure, their military might, and their food supplies into the fray in order to compel Finland to take action.

That, comrades, was the second stage of international intervention, our second historic victory. First, we won the workers and peasants away from Britain, France and America. These troops could not fight against us. Secondly, we won away from them these small countries, all of which are against us, and in which not Soviet, but bourgeois rule dominates. They displayed friendly neutrality towards us and acted contrary to the desires of that mighty world force, the Entente, for it was a beast that wanted to crush them.

We witness here on a world scale the same thing that happened to the Siberian peasants, who believed in the Constituent Assembly and helped the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks to join forces with Kolchak and to strike at us. When they learned to their own cost that Kolchak represented the dictatorship of the very worst exploiters, a plunderous dictatorship of landowners and capitalists which was worse than that of the tsar, they organised the tremendous number of revolts in Siberia about which comrades have given us reliable information, and which now guarantee the complete return to us of Siberia, this time politically conscious. What happened to the Siberian peasant, with all his backwardness and political ignorance, has now happened on a broader scale, on a world scale, to all the small nations. They hated the Bolsheviks; some of them had suppressed the Bolsheviks with a bloody hand, with furious White Terror, but when they saw their "liberators", the British officers, they understood the meaning of British and American "democracy". When representatives of the British and American bourgeoisie appeared in Finland and Estonia, the acts of suppression they began were more brazen than those of

the Russian imperialists had been, because the Russian imperialists had belonged to an older period and did not know how to suppress properly, whereas these people do know, and go about it thoroughly.

That is why this victory at the second stage is a far more lasting one than is apparent at the moment. I am not exaggerating at all, and consider exaggerations to be extremely dangerous. I have not the slightest doubt that further attempts will be made by the Entente to set against us now one, now another of the small states that are our neighbours. Such attempts will occur because the small states are wholly dependent on the Entente, because all this talk about freedom, independence and democracy is sheer hypocrisy, and the Entente may compel them once again to raise their hand against us. But if this attempt was foiled at such a convenient moment when it was so easy to wage a struggle against us, we may, I think, say definitely that in this respect the main difficulty is undoubtedly behind us. We are entitled to say this, and to say it without the slightest exaggeration, fully conscious that the Entente countries possess a tremendous advantage in strength. We have won a lasting victory. Attempts will be made against us, but we shall defeat them with greater ease, because the small states, despite their bourgeois system, have become convinced by experience, not theory—these gentlemen are theory-proof—that the Entente is a more brazen and predatory brute than the one they have in their minds when they think of the Bolsheviks, the bogey used to scare children and cultured philistines all over Europe.

But our victories were not limited to this. In the first place we won over to our side the workers and peasants of the Entente countries; secondly, we gained the neutrality of the small nations under the Entente's domination and, thirdly, we began to win over, within the Entente countries, the petty bourgeoisie and educated townsfolk who had been completely opposed to us. To prove this I will quote the newspaper *l'Humanité* of October 26 which I have here. This newspaper has always belonged to the Second International, was rabidly chauvinistic during the war, adhered to the viewpoint of socialists similar to our

Mensheviks and Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, and still plays the role of a conciliator; it now announces that it has become convinced of a change in mood among the workers. The paper did not see this in Odessa but on the streets and at meetings in Paris, when the workers stopped everyone who dared say a word against Bolshevik Russia. As politicians who have learned a fair amount during the course of several revolutions, as persons who understand what sort of force the people are, they dare not say a word in favour of intervention, and are all speaking against it. Moreover, it is not only the socialists who say this (they call themselves socialists, but for a long time we have been aware what sort of socialists they are); the same issue of *l'Humanité* of October 26, which I quoted, contains a statement by a large number of French intellectuals, representative of French public opinion. The signatories to this statement are headed by Anatole France and include Ferdinand Buisson; altogether I counted the names of 71 bourgeois intellectuals famed throughout France, who state that they are against intervention in Russia's affairs, because the blockade of Russia, the attempt to starve her out, from which children and the aged are perishing, cannot be tolerated—it is incompatible with culture and civilisation. The well-known French historian Aulard, who supports the bourgeois point of view in full, writes in his letter, "As a Frenchman I am an enemy of the Bolsheviks, as a Frenchman I support democracy, it is ridiculous to suspect me of the contrary, but when I read that France has invited Germany to participate in the blockade of Russia, when I read that France has approached Germany with this proposal—then I feel myself blushing with shame." It may be that this is just an expression of an intellectual's feelings but we are justified in saying that this is our third victory, a victory over imperialist France within the country itself. Such is the implication of this statement, feeble and pathetic as it is, the statement of intellectuals whose bark, as we know from hundreds of examples, is far worse than their bite, but who serve as a good barometer, an indicator of the trend developing amongst the petty bourgeoisie, of the way in which public opinion is reacting, permeated as it is with bour-

geois sentiment. If we have achieved such results within France herself, where all the bourgeois papers write about us only in the most lying terms, then we say to ourselves: it looks as if a second Dreyfus case is beginning in France, only on a much larger scale. At that time the bourgeois intellectuals fought against clerical and military reactionaries, while the working class could not consider it their business, as the objective conditions were absent, the deep revolutionary feeling of today did not then exist. And now? If, after the recent electoral victory of the most rabid reactionaries and in the face of a regime hostile to the Bolsheviks, the French bourgeois intellectuals say that they are ashamed of the alliance between reactionary France and reactionary Germany for the purpose of starving out the workers and peasants of Russia, then we can say to ourselves that this is the third and greatest of our victories. And I should like to see how, with this situation within the country, Clemenceau, Lloyd George and Wilson will carry out the plan of fresh attacks on Russia they dream of. Just try it, gentlemen! (Applause.)

Comrades, I repeat that it would be a great mistake to jump to hasty conclusions because of all this. There can be no doubt that the imperialists will resume their attempts, but we are absolutely confident that these attempts, no matter by what powerful forces they may be undertaken, will end in failure. We can say that the Civil War which we conducted with such tremendous sacrifices has ended in victory. It has been victorious, not only on a Russian scale, but on a world-historical scale. Every argument I have presented to you has been based on the results of the military campaign. That is why, I repeat, new attempts are doomed to failure because the imperialists have become much weaker and we have become much stronger after our victory over Kolchak, over Yudenich, and when there are signs that the victory over Denikin, now in its early stages, is imminent. Did not Kolchak have the aid of the all-powerful Entente? Did not the peasants of the Urals and Siberia, who returned the smallest number of Bolsheviks to the Constituent Assembly, solidly support the Constituent Assembly front, which at that time was

the front of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries? Were not they the best human material against the Communists? Is it not a fact that Siberia was a country with no landed estates and where we were not immediately able to assist the mass of peasants in the same way as we were able to help all other Russian peasants? What did Kolchak lack to defeat us? He lacked what all imperialists lack. He remained an exploiter and had to act in the backwash of a world war, in circumstances in which he could only babble about democracy and freedom, but which made possible one of two dictatorships—either the dictatorship of the exploiters which frenziedly defends their privileges and insists on payment of interest on the bills, whereby they wish to squeeze millions out of all peoples, or the dictatorship of the workers which fights the power of the capitalists and wishes to establish firmly the power of the working people. It was only because of this that Kolchak came to grief. It was in this way—not by voting, which is, of course, in certain circumstances not a bad way—that the Siberian and Ural peasants actually determined their destiny. In the summer of 1918 they were dissatisfied with the Bolsheviks. They saw that the Bolsheviks forced them to sell their surplus grain at a non-speculative price and so they turned to Kolchak. Now the peasant has seen, compared and arrived at a different conclusion. Despite all he was taught in the past, he has understood, because he has learned from his own experience what many Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks do not want to understand from theory (*applause*)—that there must be one of two dictatorships, that he must choose either the dictatorship of the workers—and this means to assist all working people to throw off the yoke of the exploiters—or the dictatorship of the exploiters. We have won the peasants to our side, we have proved in practice through the most bitter experience, through unprecedented difficulties that we, as representatives of the working class, can give the peasants better and more successful leadership than any other party. Other parties like to accuse us of carrying on a struggle against the peasants, of being unable to arrive at a proper agreement with them, and they all offer their kind and noble services to reconcile us with the peasants.

We are most grateful to you, gentlemen, but we do not think that you will manage it! We, at any rate, showed long ago that we were able to do this. We did not paint the peasant rosy pictures that told him he would be able to make the transition from capitalist society without iron discipline and the firm rule of the working class; or that merely gathering votes would decide the world-historical problem of the struggle against capital. We said openly that dictatorship is a harsh, severe and even bloody word, but we said that the dictatorship of the workers will ensure the end of the yoke of the exploiters, and we proved to be correct. The peasant, having experienced both dictatorships, chose the dictatorship of the working class, and will go forward with it to complete victory. (*Applause.*)

Comrades, from what I have said about our international successes it follows—and, I think, it is not necessary to dwell at length on this—that we must repeat our peace proposal in a manner that is calm and business-like to the maximum degree. We must do this because it is a proposal we have made many times, and each time we gained something in the eyes of every educated man, even if he was our enemy, that made him blush with shame. That was the case when Bullitt came here, was received by Comrade Chicherin, talked with him and with me, and when we concluded a preliminary agreement on peace in the course of a few hours. And he assured us (those gentlemen like to boast) that America is everything, and who would worry about France in face of America's strength? But when we signed the agreement the French and British ministers did this. (*Lenin makes an expressive gesture with his foot. Laughter.*) Bullitt was left with a useless piece of paper and he was told, "Who would have thought you were naïve and foolish enough to believe in the democracy of Britain and France?" (*Applause.*) The result is that in the same issue I read the full text of the agreement with Bullitt in French and it was published in all the British and American newspapers. The result is that they are showing themselves to the whole world to be either rogues or infants—let them take their choice! (*Applause.*) All the sympathies even of the petty bourgeoisie, even of those bourgeois who have any sort of

an education and who recall how they once fought their own tsars and kings, are on our side, because we signed the hardest possible peace terms in a business-like manner and said, "The price of the blood of our workers and soldiers is too high for us; we shall pay you businessmen a heavy tribute as the price of peace; we consent to a heavy tribute to preserve the lives of our workers and peasants." That is why I think there is no reason for us to dwell long on this, and in conclusion I shall read a draft resolution that will express, in the name of the Congress of Soviets, our unwavering desire to pursue a policy of peace. (*Applause.*)

Published in *Pravda*,
Nos. 275, 276, 277
December 7, 9, 10, 1919

Collected Works, Vol. 30,
pp. 207-22

**FROM THE REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE
ALL-RUSSIA CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
AND THE COUNCIL OF PEOPLE'S COMMISSARS
DELIVERED AT THE FIRST SESSION
OF THE ALL-RUSSIA
CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,
SEVENTH CONVOCATION⁷⁰
FEBRUARY 2, 1920**

Comrades, my report on the activities of the Council of People's Commissars and the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, whose functions in periods between meetings have been carried out by the Presidium of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, falls naturally into two main subdivisions—the first on foreign policy, the Soviet Republic's international position, and the second on internal development and our main economic tasks. Allow me to present to you in that order the main facts of our work during the period under review, i.e., during the past two months.

As far as the Soviet Republic's international position is concerned, it has been determined in the main by the successes of the Red Army. As you know, the last remnants of Kolchak's army in the Far East have been almost wiped out, while the rivalry and enmity between Japan and America, nominally allies, are becoming more and more obvious and prevent them from fully developing their onslaught against the Soviet Republic. After the annihilation of Yudenich's troops and after the capture,

in the South, of Novocherkassk and Rostov-on-Don in early January; their main forces suffered so decisive a blow that the Soviet Republic's military position radically changed, and although the war was not over, every country saw clearly that their former hopes of crushing the military forces of the Soviet Republic had collapsed.

Acknowledgement of this radical change in the Soviet Republic's international position was shown by the wireless message to us (not delivered officially) of the decision of the Allied Council adopted on January 16 to lift the blockade against the Soviet Republic. The main section of the decision taken by the Council says... (*reads*).⁷¹

There is no need for me to criticise the diplomacy contained in this formulation; it is so striking that it is not worth wasting time saying that the attitude of the Allies to Russia remains unchanged. If that is how the Allies understand their policy—that the lifting of the blockade does not change it—then it shows how unsound their policy is. The importance of this decision for us, however, is in its economic, not its political, aspect. Lifting the blockade is a fact of major international significance showing that a new stage in the socialist revolution has begun. For the blockade was in fact the principal, really strong weapon with which the imperialists of the world wanted to strangle Soviet Russia.

At the last Congress of Soviets I had occasion to state and expand the idea that the struggle against Soviet Russia had resulted, not only in the workers and peasants of France, Britain and other advanced countries forcing the imperialists to renounce the struggle, but in the mass of the petty bourgeoisie within these countries becoming opponents of the blockade. And of course, this opposition by the middle sections of the population in countries like Britain and France was bound to influence international imperialist policy. Knowing their brand of diplomacy, we cannot expect them to act in a straightforward manner, without any reservations, without wanting to restore the past, or by some cunning trick or other return to their previous policy, which they cannot pursue openly at the moment. It must be said, however, that on the whole we have gained tremendous victories, that we have even been

able to deprive the Allies of a weapon which only they possessed—the navy, despite the fact that waverers tried to scare us by saying the navy was invincible. Nevertheless, the development of political relations showed that even this invincible navy was in no fit state to fight us. We, who were unable to put up any naval resistance, forced the imperialist powers to abandon this weapon.

Of course, this change in policy on the international scene does not have an immediate effect, but the fact remains that we have now entered the sphere of worldwide international relations, and this enables us to get support from the more advanced countries. It is true that economically and financially these countries are in a sorry plight, they are all going downhill, and we cannot expect much from them; but with the opportunity to develop our own industry, we can count on receiving machinery for production, machinery for the restoration of our industry. And above all, that which had cut us off completely, by means of the blockade, from the advanced countries, has been broken down.

After the Allied Council had been forced to abandon this weapon our victories in the field of international politics continued, the greatest of them being that we succeeded in concluding peace with Estonia.⁷² We received a communication from Joffe and Gukovsky today saying: "Today, February 2, at 2 a.m. Moscow time, peace was concluded between Russia and Estonia. The Estonian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Birk, arrived from Revel to sign the document."

Comrades, the text of this peace document which was discussed at great length and is of tremendous importance has been sent by messenger who should arrive tomorrow morning, but we have now received the exact text by telegraph, and it will be distributed tomorrow. It will be discussed and ratified. This document is of the highest importance to us. The peace treaty between Russia and Estonia is of epoch-making significance. We have succeeded in concluding a peace treaty with a government which is also becoming democratic and whose relations with us will now be stable, but which up to now has been supported

by the whole imperialist world. Therefore we must regard this as an act of tremendous historical importance.

We know that people who stand between imperialism and democracy usually go over to one side or the other. So you see, we have undoubtedly gained a victory, because peace has been concluded, and this government must now proceed against our enemy. The theoretical significance of this fact is that in the imperialist epoch the whole world is split into a vast number of big and small states, the small states being absolutely helpless, an insignificant group compared to the rich powers which completely dominate a number of small, weak states. Imperialism is the epoch in which the division of the whole world takes place, when the whole of the world's population is divided into a minority of exploiting, oppressor countries, and a majority of countries with small, weak populations that exist in a state of colonial dependence on the minority.

When we won peace with Estonia we proved that we were able to go forward as a proletarian and communist state. How have we done this? We have shown all the belligerent Entente powers who are opposed to peace that the sympathy we are able to evoke among our opponents and bourgeois governments, the sympathy of a small country, is more powerful than all that military oppression, all that financial aid and all those economic ties which link that small country to the powerful world states. The Entente has seen that it is not only when we use force that we are able to win; we are in a position to refute the lie and slander spread against us by the bourgeois governments of the world when they say the Bolsheviks retain power by force alone. What was it that enabled us to prevail over the combined forces of world imperialism in regard to Estonia, a country which had always suffered violence at the hands of the Russia of the tsars and landowners? It was our proving our ability to renounce, in all sincerity, the use of force at the appropriate moment, in order to change to a peace policy, and so win the sympathy of the bourgeois government of a small country, regardless of all the support given it by international capital. This is a fact of historical significance. Estonia is a small country, a small republic, but she is oppressed

economically and militarily in a thousand and one ways by world imperialist capital, so much so that her entire population comes under this oppression. And this peace now proves that we can, in spite of our exhaustion, weakness and disarray, gain the upper hand over the whiteguard army with its imperialist backing. The powerful Entente knows how to reply to force with even more triumphant force, but this peace proves that we do not have to resort to force to win the sympathy and support of the bourgeoisie.

A most difficult international problem has arisen here. The rate of capitalist development in different countries varies; this development takes place under different conditions, in various ways and by various means. A socialist republic in one country exists alongside all the capitalist countries of the world and causes their bourgeoisie to waver. From this they concluded that our position was a hopeless one; we had defeated the whiteguards by force, but what, they asked, were we going to do about the rest of the world? We shall defeat that too. The peace with Estonia proves that this is no empty phrase. The entire pressure of international capital was overcome in that area where our rejection of the use of force was recognised to be sincere. "Don't make peace with the Bolsheviks, otherwise we shall conquer you by starvation; we shall give you neither financial nor economic aid," said world capital. And Estonia proved to be one of the small, formally independent countries which said to herself, "We rely more on the fact that the Bolsheviks are able to live in peace with other, weaker nations, even with a bourgeois government, than we do on all the powerful democratic countries of the Entente."

Democracy is most clearly manifested in the fundamental question of war and peace. All the powers are preparing a fresh imperialist war, and this is seen daily by the workers of the world. Any day now America and Japan will hurl themselves at each other; Britain grabbed so many colonies after her victory over Germany that the other imperialist powers will never resign themselves to this. A new fanatical war is being prepared, and the people are aware of this. And just at this moment Russia, with

her huge forces, who is accused of intending to fling those forces against a small state as soon as she has finished with Yudenich, Kolchak and Denikin—Russia has concluded a democratic peace with Estonia. Furthermore, the terms of the peace treaty provide for a number of territorial concessions on our part which do not completely correspond to the strict observance of the principle of self-determination of nations, and prove in practice that the question of frontiers is of secondary importance to us: the question of peaceful relations, however, the question of our ability to await the development of the conditions of life of each nation, is not only an important question of principle, it is also a matter in which we have succeeded in winning the confidence of nations hostile to us. It is no accident that we have achieved this in relation to Estonia; it is evidence that a weak proletarian republic, existing in isolation and apparently helpless, has begun to win to its side countries dependent on the imperialist states—and they constitute the vast majority. That is why our peace with Estonia is of such great historic significance. No matter how the Entente strives to start a war—even if it succeeds in turning peace once again into war—the fact will remain, firmly established in history, that despite all the pressure of international capital we were able to inspire greater confidence in a small country ruled by the bourgeoisie than the so-called democratic, but in reality predatory, imperialist bourgeoisie.

We by chance came to possess some very interesting documents showing how our policy compared with that of the allegedly democratic, but in actual fact predatory, powers of the whole world, which please permit me to read to you. These documents were furnished by a whiteguard officer or official named Oleinikov who was commissioned by one whiteguard government to hand over some highly important documents to another. But he handed them over to us instead.⁷³ (*Applause.*) It proved possible to send these documents to Russia, and I shall read them to you, although it will take some time to do so. Nevertheless, they are very interesting for they very clearly reveal the hidden springs of policy. The first document is a telegram to Minister Gulkevich from Sazonov:

Paris, October 14, 1919, No. 668.

S. D. Sazonov conveys his respects to Konstantin Nikolayevich, and has the honour to enclose for his information copies of a telegram from B. A. Bakhmetev, No. 1050, and a telegram from I. I. Sukin No. 23, on the situation in the Baltic Provinces.

Then comes a more interesting document—a telegram from Washington dated October 11:

Received October 12, 1919. Incoming No. 3346.

Bakhmetev to the Minister.

Washington, October 11, 1919, No. 1050.

Ref. my telegram No. 1045.

(In code) The State Department acquainted me verbally with the instructions given to Gade. He is appointed the Commissar of the American Government in the Baltic Provinces of Russia. He is not accredited to any Russian Government. His mission is to observe and inform. His behaviour must not lead the local population to expect that the American Government could agree to support separatist trends going beyond autonomy. On the contrary, the American Government trusts that the population of the Baltic Provinces will help their Russian brothers in their work of general state importance. The instructions are based on the interpretation of the agreement of the Allied Governments with the Supreme Ruler⁷⁴ as outlined in my memorandum of June 17 to the government. Gade has been given extracts from the recent speeches of the President in which he fulminates against Bolshevism.

So, the American Government intimates that its representative can issue any kind of instructions but may not support independence, i.e., may not guarantee the independence of these states. This is what directly or indirectly came to light, and Estonia could not be kept in ignorance of the fact that she was being deceived by the Great Powers. Of course, everyone could have guessed this, but now we have the documents and they will be published:

Received October 12, 1919. Incoming No. 3347

Sukin to the Minister.

Omsk, October 9, 1919, No. 28.

(In code) Knox has given the Supreme Ruler the message of the British War Office in which the latter warns of the inclination of the Baltic states to conclude a peace with the Bolsheviks who guarantee them immediate recognition of their independence. At the same time the British War Office raises the question of the advisability of paralysing this pledge by satisfying, in its turn, the wishes of the states indicated. We replied to Knox by referring to the principles outlined in the Note of the Supreme Ruler to the Powers on June 4, and, in addition, we pointed out that the conclusion of a peace between the

Baltic states and the Bolsheviks would be undoubtedly fraught with danger since this would permit the release of part of the Soviet forces and would clear the way to the infiltration of Bolshevism in the West. The mere fact that they are ready to talk peace is in our opinion evidence of the utter demoralisation of the parties of these self-governing entities which cannot protect themselves from the penetration of aggressive Bolshevism.

Expressing the conviction that the Powers could not approve of the further spread of Bolshevism, we pointed to the necessity of withdrawing all aid from the Baltic states since this would be a real means of exerting influence by the Powers, and is more advisable than competition in promises with the Bolsheviks, who now have nothing to lose.

In transmitting the above, I would request you to make similar representations in Paris and London; we are making a special approach to Bakhmetev.

Received October 9, 1919. Incoming No. 3286.
Sablin to the Minister.

London, October 7, 1919, No. 677.

(In code) In a letter to Guchkov, the Director of Military Operations of the War Office, to whom Guchkov made an offer of our shipping in order to facilitate the delivery of supplies to Yudenich by the British, states that in the opinion of the War Office Yudenich has all that he requires at the moment, and that Britain is experiencing some difficulty in providing further supplies. He adds, however, that as we have shipping, we could arrange supplies for Yudenich on a commercial basis, providing we obtain credits. At the same time General Radcliffe admits that Yudenich's army must be properly equipped since it is "the only force among the Baltic states able to engage in active operations against the Bolsheviks".

Minister to Bakhmetev in Washington.
Paris, September 30, 1919, No. 2442.

(In code) From a strictly confidential Swedish source I learn that the American envoy in Stockholm, Morris, is talking about growing sympathy in America towards the Bolsheviks and of intentions to cease aid to Kolchak in order to enter into contacts with Moscow in the interests of American trade. Such statements on the part of an official representative make a strange impression.

Received October 5, 1919. Incoming No. 3244.
Bakhmetev to the Minister.
Washington, October 4, 1919, No. 1021.
Ref. your telegram No. 2442.

(In code) The State Department informed me in confidence that it is true that the envoy in Stockholm, Morris, and particularly Hapgood in Copenhagen, are well known for their Left sympathies, but that they have no influence or authority here, and that the government is obliged to admonish them from time to time, categorically pointing out that American policy is one of undeviating support of our government in the struggle against the Bolsheviks.

Here are all the documents which we shall publish and which clearly show how the battle went on around Estonia, how the Entente, Britain and France, together with Kolchak and America, all brought pressure to bear on Estonia with the one aim of preventing the signing of a peace treaty with the Bolsheviks, and how the Bolsheviks, pledging themselves to territorial concessions and guaranteeing independence, won this trial of strength. I state that this victory is of gigantic historic significance, because it has been gained without the use of force. This victory over world imperialism is a victory that is bringing the Bolsheviks the sympathy of the whole world. This victory by no means denotes that universal peace will be concluded immediately; but it does show that we represent the peace interests of the majority of the world's population against the imperialist war-mongers. Such an assessment of the situation has induced bourgeois Estonia, an opponent of communism, to conclude peace with us. Since we, a proletarian state, a Soviet republic, are concluding a peace treaty, since we are acting in a spirit of peace towards bourgeois governments oppressed by the great magnates of imperialism, we must be able to decide from this how our international policy is to be shaped.

The main task we set ourselves is to defeat the exploiters and to win to our side the waverers—this is a task of historic significance. Among the waverers are a whole number of bourgeois states which, as bourgeois states, detest us, but which, on the other hand, as oppressed states, prefer peace with us. This explains the peace with Estonia. This peace is, of course, only a first step, and its influence will only be felt in the future, but that it will be felt is a fact. Up to now we have negotiated with Latvia only through the Red Cross,⁷⁵ and the same is true of our negotiations with the Polish Government. I repeat—the peace with Estonia is bound to influence events because the basis is identical; the same attempts are being made to goad Latvia and Poland into making war on Russia as were made in the case of Estonia. Perhaps these attempts will prove successful, and since war with Poland is possible, we must be vigilant, but we are certain—this has been demonstrated by our main achievements—that we

can conclude peace and make concessions which permit the development of any form of democracy. This is now especially important because the Polish question is particularly acute. We have received a number of communications indicating that apart from bourgeois, conservative, landowning Poland, apart from the pressure being exerted by all capitalist parties in Poland, all the Entente powers are doing their utmost to incite Poland to make war against us.

As you know, the Council of People's Commissars has issued an appeal to the working people of Poland.⁷⁶ We are going to ask you to endorse this appeal as a means of fighting that campaign of calumny in which Polish landowning circles are engaged. We shall submit an additional text of an appeal to the working people of Poland. This appeal will be a blow to the imperialist powers, who are doing their utmost to incite Poland against us; for us the interests of the majority of the people take first place.

I shall now acquaint you with a telegram intercepted by us yesterday, which illustrates the attempts of American capital to present us in a certain light and thereby drag us into a war with Poland. The telegram says (*reads*). I have said and heard nothing of the sort, but they are able to lie because it is not for nothing that they spend their money on spreading lying rumours that have a definite aim. Their bourgeois government guarantees them this. (*Continues reading the telegram.*) This telegram was sent from Europe to America and was paid for out of capitalist funds; it serves as a shameless means of provoking a war with Poland. American capital is doing its utmost to bring pressure to bear on Poland and does this unashamedly, making it appear that the Bolsheviks want to finish with Kolchak and Denikin in order to throw all their "iron troops" against Poland.

It is important that we should here and now endorse the decision of the Council of People's Commissars, and then we must do what we did previously in relation to other states, and also what we did in regard to the troops of Kolchak and Denikin. We must immediately appeal to the Polish people and explain the real state of affairs. We know full well that this method of ours has a most positive

effect in tending to disrupt the ranks of our enemy. And in the end, this method will lead on to the path we need, the path on to which it has led the working population of all countries. This policy must make a definite beginning—no matter how difficult this may prove—and once a beginning is made, we shall carry it through to completion.

I must mention that we have been pursuing the same policy in respect of all other countries. We invited Georgia and Azerbaijan to conclude an agreement against Denikin. They refused, pleading non-interference in the affairs of other countries. We shall see how the workers and peasants of Georgia and Azerbaijan regard this.

This policy has been applied even more cautiously in respect of the Western nations than in dealing with the nations of Russia. It involved such countries as Latvia, Estonia, Poland and, on the other hand, a number of Eastern countries whose developmental level is the same as that of most of those colonial countries which constitute the majority of the world's population. They are kept down by Britain, who continues to hold colonial slaves under her sway. Our policy in relation to West-European countries has been very cautious—it will take some time for them to get over their own Kerensky period—but our policy in the East must be even more cautious and patient, for here we are dealing with countries that are much more backward, are under the oppressive influence of religious fanaticism, are imbued with greater distrust of the Russian people, and for decades and centuries were oppressed by the tsarist government's capitalist and imperialist policy, by the policy conducted towards these nations by Russia as the dominant nation.

We have granted autonomy to the Bashkir Republic. We must found an autonomous Tatar Republic.⁷⁷ We shall continue the same policy in relation to all the Eastern peoples, and say to ourselves that we, who are faced by a huge front of imperialist powers, we, who are fighting imperialism, represent an alliance that requires close military unity, and any attempt to violate this unity we regard as absolutely impermissible, as a betrayal of the struggle against international imperialism. However, in implementing this policy we must be even more cautious.

For if the European countries have to go through a Kerensky period, in the countries that are at a lower developmental level there are even greater elements of distrust, and it will require more time to influence them. We support the independence and sovereignty of these countries. We appeal to their working people. We say: unity of the military forces is imperative; any deviation from this unity is impermissible.

We are confident that, by systematically pursuing our policy of close alliance, we shall achieve greater success than before in our relations with the peoples of the East. And our success is already great. The Soviet Republic enjoys tremendous popularity among all the Eastern peoples for the same reason that made it possible for us to conclude a peace treaty with a small Western state, because they see in us an unswerving fighter against imperialism, because ours is the only republic which is waging a war against imperialism and is capable of utilising every situation without the use of force, and which is also able to gain a victory by renouncing the use of force.

Needless to say, a far more perfected variety of this policy is being implemented in relation to the Ukrainian Republic. Here the problem has been simplified by the prior conclusion of an agreement between the All-Russia Central Executive Committee and the Central Executive Committee of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic.⁷⁸ On the basis of this agreement, which implies a close federation of both republics in the struggle against the imperialist countries, we are building an ever closer alliance. As a result of their bitter experience of Denikin's rule, the mass of Ukrainian peasants and workers are becoming convinced that only the closest alliance between the Ukraine and the Russian Republic will be really invincible in the face of international imperialism, and that at the time of struggle against imperialism there is nothing to be gained by the separation of the Ukrainian state, since imperialism will take advantage of every division to crush Soviet power. Such a division is criminal. Our policy is taking deep root in the Ukraine, and we are confident that the forthcoming All-Ukraine Congress of Soviets of Workers and Peasants will officially endorse this policy. These are the few

remarks to which I must limit myself on the question of the international situation. I shall ask this session to endorse all the practical proposals I have to make (I have enumerated them) on behalf of the Council of People's Commissars and the All-Russia Central Executive Committee.

In passing on to the work of internal development I must first deal with certain measures taken by our government, and then proceed to the most important matter of all—the change-over to a new course, the transition from military tasks to those of state organisation.

In regard to our internal policy for the two months under review, among the main measures which more or less stand out from a number of current tasks, the following decision requiring the endorsement of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee is of particular importance. This is the decision to abolish the death penalty. As you know, immediately after the main victory over Denikin, after the capture of Rostov, Comrade Dzerzhinsky, the People's Commissar for Internal Affairs, who is in charge of the Cheka, submitted a proposal to the Council of People's Commissars, and had it endorsed in his own department, that the passing of all death sentences by the Cheka be abolished. When bourgeois democracy in Europe does all in its power to spread the lie that Soviet Russia is predominantly terrorist, when this lie is spread about us by bourgeois democracy and by the socialists of the Second International, when Kautsky writes a special book entitled *Terrorism and Communism* in which he declares that communist power is based on terrorism, then you can well imagine the kind of lies spread on this subject. In order to refute this lie we have decided on the step taken by Comrade Dzerzhinsky, endorsed by the Council of People's Commissars, and which now needs the approval of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee.

We were forced to use terror in response to the terror employed by the Entente, when the mighty powers of the world flung their hordes against us, stopping at nothing. We could not have lasted two days had we not replied to these attempts of officers and whiteguards in a merciless fashion. This meant the use of terror, but this was

forced on us by the terrorist methods of the Entente. But as soon as we had gained a decisive victory, even before the end of the war, immediately after the capture of Rostov, we renounced capital punishment, and have therefore proved that we intend to carry out our own programme as we had promised. We say that the use of violence arises from the need to crush the exploiters, the landowners and capitalists. When this is accomplished we shall renounce all extraordinary measures. We have proved this in practice. And I think, I hope, and I am confident that the All-Russia Central Executive Committee will unanimously endorse this measure of the Council of People's Commissioners and will implement it in such a way that it will be impossible to apply the death penalty in Russia. Needless to say, any attempt by the Entente to resume methods of war will force us to reintroduce the former terror; we know that we are living in a time of the law of the jungle, when kind words are of no avail. This is what we had in mind, and as soon as the decisive struggle was over, we immediately began to abolish measures which all other powers apply without any time limit having been set.

... In the next few months all our energies must be concentrated on food deliveries and the extension of our resources of food supplies. There must not be the slightest departure from this. At the same time let the scientists and technicians produce a long-term plan for the electrification of all Russia. Let the links which we have established with the outside world, with capitalist Europe, that gateway which we made for ourselves by concluding peace with Estonia, serve to provide us immediately with essential technical aid. When, in the next few months, we have solved the basic problems of transport and food supplies, when we have solved the problem of labour conscription, on which problems we shall wholly concentrate all our energies, not allowing ourselves to be deflected from this by anything else for a few months—when we have accomplished this we shall prove that we can go on with developmental tasks that will last many years and put the whole of Russia on to an advanced technological footing, abolishing the division between town and country, and making it possible to conquer completely and decisively the back-

wardness of the countryside, its scattered economy and its ignorance, from which stem all the stagnation, all the backwardness, all the oppression that have existed up to now. And in this matter, that of the peaceful struggle on the bloodless front of the reorganisation of industry, we shall, if we employ all our military skill and all our energy, and concentrate all our forces on the fulfilment of this task, achieve success that will be even more decisive, even more glorious, than those we have won in the military field. (*Applause.*)

Brief reports published
on February 3, 1920
in *Pravda* No. 23,
and in *Izvestia* No. 23

First published in full
in the Fourth (Russian)
Edition of the *Collected Works*

Collected Works, Vol. 30,
pp. 315-28, 335-36

**IN REPLY TO QUESTIONS
PUT BY KARL WIEGAND,
BERLIN CORRESPONDENT
OF *UNIVERSAL SERVICE*⁷⁹**

1. Do we intend to attack Poland and Rumania?

No. We have declared most emphatically and officially, in the name of the Council of People's Commissars and the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, our peaceful intentions. It is very much to be regretted that the French capitalist government is instigating Poland (and presumably Rumania, too) to attack us. This is even mentioned by a number of American radios from Lyons.

2. What are our plans in Asia?

They are the same as in Europe: peaceful coexistence with all peoples; with the workers and peasants of all nations awakening to a new life—a life without exploiters, without landowners, without capitalists, without merchants. The imperialist war of 1914-18, the war of the capitalists of the Anglo-French (and Russian) group against the German-Austrian capitalist group for the partition of the world, has awakened Asia and has strengthened there, as everywhere else, the urge towards

freedom, towards peaceful labour and against possible future wars.

3. What would be the basis of peace with America?

Let the American capitalists leave us alone. We shall not touch them. We are even ready to pay them in gold for any machinery, tools, etc., useful to our transport and industries. We are ready to pay not only in gold, but in raw materials too.

4. What are the obstacles to such a peace?

None on our part; imperialism on the part of the American (and of any other) capitalists.

5. What are our views of the deportation of Russian revolutionaries from America?

We have accepted them. We are not afraid of revolutionaries here in this country. As a matter of fact, we are not afraid of anybody, and if America is afraid of a few more hundred or thousand of its citizens, we are ready to begin negotiations with a view of receiving any citizens whom America thinks dangerous (with the exception of criminals, of course).

6. What possibilities are there of an economic alliance between Russia and Germany?

Unfortunately, they are not great. The Scheidemanns are bad allies. We stand for an alliance with all countries without exception.

7. What are our views upon the allied demand for the extradition of war criminals?

If we are to speak seriously on this matter of war guilt, the guilty ones are the capitalists of all countries. Hand over to us all your landed proprietors owning more than a hundred hectares and capitalists having a capital of more than 100,000 francs and we shall educate them to

useful labour and make them break with the shameful, base and bloody role of exploiters and instigators of wars for the partition of colonies. Wars will then soon become absolutely impossible.

8. What would be the influence of peace with Russia upon the economic conditions in Europe?

Exchange of machinery for grain, flax and other raw materials—I ask, can this be disadvantageous for Europe? Clearly, it cannot be anything but beneficial.

9. What is our opinion regarding the future development of the Soviets as a world force?

The future belongs to the Soviet system all the world over. The facts have proved it. One has only to count by quarterly periods, say, the growth in the number of pamphlets, books, leaflets and newspapers standing for or sympathising with the Soviets published in any country. It cannot be otherwise. Once the workers in the cities, the workers, landless peasants and the handicraftsmen in the villages as well as the small peasants (i.e., those who do not exploit hired labour)—once this enormous majority of working people have understood that the Soviet system gives all power into their hands, releasing them from the yoke of landlords and capitalists, how could one prevent the victory of the Soviet system all over the world? I, for one, do not know of any means of preventing it.

10. Has Russia still to fear counter-revolution from without?

Unfortunately, it has, for the capitalists are stupid, greedy people. They have made a number of such stupid, greedy attempts at intervention and one has to fear repetitions until the workers and peasants of all countries thoroughly *re-educate* their own capitalists.

11. Is Russia ready to enter into business relations with America?

Of course she is ready to do so, and with all other countries. Peace with Estonia, to whom we have conceded a

great deal, has proved our readiness, for the sake of business relations, to give even industrial concessions on certain conditions.

February 18, 1920

V. Ulyanov (N. Lenin)

Published on February 21, 1920
in the *New York Evening Journal*
No. 12671

First published in Russian
on April 22, 1950
in *Pravda* No. 112

Collected Works, Vol. 30,
pp. 365-67

**IN REPLY TO QUESTIONS
PUT BY A CORRESPONDENT
OF THE *DAILY EXPRESS*⁸⁰**

1. What is our attitude towards the raising of the blockade?

We consider it a big step forward. The possibility is being opened for us to pass from a war that was forced on us by the capitalist governments of the Entente to peaceful reconstruction. This is of the greatest importance to us. Straining all our efforts towards the restoration of the economic life of the country, ruined first by the war between capitalists over the Dardanelles and the colonies, then by the war of the capitalists of the Entente and Russia against the workers of Russia, we are now, among other measures, working out, with the aid of a number of scientists and experts, a plan of electrification of the whole country.⁸¹ This plan is to be realised over a period of many years. The electrification will rejuvenate Russia. Electrification based on the Soviet system will mean the complete success of the foundations of communism in our country—foundations of a cultured life, without exploiters, without capitalists, without landlords, without merchants.

The raising of the blockade will help to accomplish Russia's electrification.

2. What influence will the Allies' decision to cease offensive action have on the offensive actions of the Soviet power?

The Allies, together with their allies and their lackeys—Kolchak, Denikin, and the capitalists of the surrounding countries—have attacked us. We did not attack anyone.

We concluded peace with Estonia even at the cost of material sacrifices.

We are impatiently waiting to see the Allies' "decision" supported by their *deeds*, but the story of the Versailles Peace and of its consequences, unfortunately, indicates that in most cases the Allies' words disagree with their deeds and the decisions remain scraps of paper.

3. Is the present *status quo* satisfactory from the standpoint of Soviet policy?

Yes, because every *status quo* in politics is a transition from old forms to new ones. The present *status quo* is, from many points of view, a transition from war to peace. Such a change is desirable to us for this reason, and insofar do we consider the *status quo* satisfactory.

4. What are our aims in connection with the cessation of hostilities on the part of the Allies?

Our aims, as already mentioned, are peaceful economic building. A detailed plan of it, on the basis of electrification, is being at present worked out by a committee of scientists and technicians—or rather, by a number of committees—in accordance with the resolution of the February (1920) session of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee.

Written on February 18, 1920
Published on February 23, 1920
in the *Daily Express* No. 6198

First published in Russian
on April 22, 1950
in *Pravda* No. 112

Collected Works, Vol. 30,
pp. 368-69

**TALK WITH LINCOLN EYRE,
CORRESPONDENT OF *THE WORLD* (U.S.A.)⁸²**

Allies Playing "Chess Game"

Of the Allies' reported decision to lift the blockade Lenin said:

It is hard to see sincerity behind so vague a proposal, coupled as it seems to be with preparations to attack us afresh through Poland. At first glance the Allied Council's proposition looks plausible enough—the resumption of commercial relations through the medium of the Russian co-operatives. But the co-operatives do not any longer exist, having been linked up with our Soviet distribution organs. Therefore what is meant when the Allies talk of dealing with the co-operatives? Certainly it is not clear.

Therefore I say that closer examination convinces us that this Paris decision is simply a move in the Allied chess game the motives of which are still obscure.

Lenin paused a moment, then added with a broad grin:

Far obscurer, for instance, than Marshal Foch's intended visit to Warsaw.

I asked if he deemed the probability of a Polish offensive serious (it must be recalled that in Russia the talk was of a drive by the Poles against the Bolsheviks, not vice versa).

Beyond doubt, Lenin replied. *Clemenceau and Foch are very, very serious gentlemen, and the one originated and*

the other is going to carry out this offensive scheme. It is a grave menace, of course, but we have faced graver ones. It does not cause us fear so much as disappointment that the Allies should still pursue the impossible. For a Polish offensive can no more settle the Russian problem for them than did Kolchak's and Denikin's. Poland has many troubles of her own, remember. And it is obvious that she can get no help from any of her neighbours, including Rumania.

Yet peace seems nearer than before, I suggested.

Yes, that's true. If peace is a corollary of trade with us, the Allies cannot avoid it much longer. I have heard that Millerand, Clemenceau's successor, expresses willingness to envisage commercial relations with the Russian people. Perhaps this heralds a change of front among the French capitalists. But Churchill is still strong in England, and Lloyd George, who probably wants to do business with us, dare not risk an open rupture with the political and financial interests supporting the Churchill policy.

United States Oppresses Socialists

And America?

It is hard to see clearly what is going on there. Your bankers seem to fear us more than ever. At any rate, your government is instituting more violently repressive measures not only against the socialists but against the working class in general than any other government, even the reactionary French. Apparently it is persecuting foreigners. And yet, what would America be without her foreign workers? They are an absolute necessity to your economic development.

Still, some American manufacturers appear to have begun to realise that making money in Russia is wiser than making war against Russia, which is a good sign. We shall need American manufactures—locomotives, automobiles, etc.—more than those of any other country.

And your peace terms?

It is idle to talk further about them, Lenin returned emphatically. All the world knows that we are prepared to make peace on terms the fairness of which even the most imperialistic capitalists could not dispute. We have reiterated and reiterated our desire for peace, our need for peace and our readiness to give foreign capital the most generous concessions and guarantees. But we do not propose to be strangled to death for the sake of peace.

I know of no reason why a socialist state like ours cannot do business indefinitely with capitalist countries. We don't mind taking the capitalist locomotives and farming machinery, so why should they mind taking our socialist wheat, flax and platinum. Socialist grain tastes the same as any other grain, does it not? Of course, they will have to have business relations with the dreadful Bolsheviks, that is, the Soviet Government. But it should not be harder for American steel manufacturers, for instance, to deal with the Soviets than it was for them to deal with Entente governments in their war-time munition deals.

Europe Dependent on Russia

That is why this talk of reopening trade with Russia through co-operatives seems to us insincere, or at least, obscure—a move in a game of chess rather than a frank, straightforward proposition that would be immediately grasped and acted upon. Moreover, if the Allied Council really means to lift the blockade, why doesn't it tell us of its intentions? We are without official word from Paris. What little we know is derived from newspaper dispatches picked up by our wireless.

The statesmen of the Entente and the United States do not seem to understand that Russia's present economic distress is simply a part of the world's economic distress. Until the economic problem is faced from a world standpoint and not merely from the standpoint of certain nations or a group of nations, a solution is impossible. Without Russia, Europe cannot get on her feet. And with

Europe prostrate, America's position becomes critical. What good is America's wealth if she cannot buy with it that which she needs? America cannot eat or wear the gold she has accumulated, can she? She can't trade profitably, that is on a basis that will be of real value to her, with Europe until Europe is able to give her the things she wants in exchange for that which she has to give. And Europe cannot give her those things until she is on her feet economically.

World Needs Russian Goods

In Russia we have wheat, flax, platinum, potash and many minerals of which the whole world stands in desperate need. *The world must come to us for them in the end, Bolshevism or no Bolshevism.* There are signs that a realisation of this truth is gradually awakening. But meanwhile not only Russia but all Europe is going to pieces, and the Allied Council still indulges in tergiversation. Russia can be saved from utter ruin and Europe too, but it must be done soon and quickly. And the Allied Council is slow, so very slow. In fact, it has already been dissolved, I believe, in favour of a Council of Ambassadors, leaving nothing settled and with only a League of Nations which is non-existent, still-born, to take its place. *How can the League of Nations possibly come to life without the United States to give it backbone!*

I inquired as to whether the Soviet Government was satisfied with the military situation.

Very much so, Lenin replied promptly. The only symptoms of further military aggression against us are those I spoke of in Poland. If Poland embarks on such an adventure there will be more suffering on both sides, more lives needlessly sacrificed. *But even Foch could not give the Poles victory.* They could not defeat our Red Army even if Churchill himself fought with them.

Here Lenin threw back his head and laughed grimly. Then he went on in a graver vein:

We can be crushed, of course, by any one of the big Allied powers if they can send their own armies against us. But that they dare not do. The extraordinary paradox is that weak as Russia is compared with the Allies' boundless resources, she has not only been able to shatter every armed force, including British, American and French troops that they have managed to send against her, but to win diplomatic and moral victories as well over the *cordon sanitaire* countries. Finland refused to fight against us. We have peace with Estonia and peace with Serbia* and Lithuania⁸³ is at hand. Despite material inducements offered to and sinister threats made against these small countries by the Entente, they preferred to establish pacific relations with us.

International Situation Hopeful

This assuredly demonstrates the tremendous moral force we hold. The Baltic states, our nearest neighbours, appreciate that we alone have no designs against their independence and well-being.

And Russia's internal situation?

It is critical but hopeful. With spring the food shortage will be overcome to the extent at least of saving the cities from famine. There will be sufficient fuel then too. The reconstruction period is under way, thanks to the Red Army's stupendous performances. Now parts of that army are transformed into armies of labour, an extraordinary phenomenon only possible in a country struggling toward a high ideal. Certainly it could not be done in capitalist countries. We have sacrificed everything to victory over our armed antagonists in the past; and now we shall turn all our strength to economic rehabilitation. It will take years, but we shall win out in the end.

When do you think communism will be complete in Russia?

The question was a poser, I thought, but Lenin replied immediately:

* This was an error in the newspaper text. Serbia was not at war with Soviet Russia. Apparently Lenin spoke of Latvia.—Ed.

We mean to electrify our entire industrial system through power stations in the Urals and elsewhere. Our engineers tell us it will take ten years. When the electrification is accomplished it will be the first important stage on the road to the communist organisation of public economic life. All our industries will receive their motive power from a common source, capable of supplying them all adequately. This will eliminate wasteful competition in the quest of fuel, and place manufacturing enterprise on a sound economic footing, without which we cannot hope to achieve a full measure of interchange of essential products in accordance with communist principles.

Incidentally, in three years we expect to have 50,000,000 incandescent lamps burning in Russia. There are 70,000,000 in the United States, I believe, but in a land where electricity is in its infancy more than two-thirds of that number is a very high figure to achieve. Electrification is to my mind the most momentous of the great tasks that confront us.

Scores Socialist Leaders

At the close of our talk Lenin delivered himself, not for publication, however, of some cutting criticism of certain socialist leaders in Europe and America which revealed his lack of faith in the ability or even the desire of these gentry to promote world revolution effectively. He evidently feels that Bolshevism will come to pass in spite of, rather than because of the "official" chieftains of socialism.

The World No. 21368
February 21, 1920

First published in Russian in 1957,
Kommunist No. 15

Verified with *The World*
text

NINTH CONGRESS OF THE R.C.P.(B.)⁸⁴

MARCH 29-APRIL 5, 1920

FROM THE REPORT OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE MARCH 29

Last spring our military situation was an extremely difficult one; as you remember, we were still to experience quite a number of defeats, of new, huge and unexpected offensives on the part of the counter-revolution and the Entente, none of which could have been anticipated by us. It was therefore only natural that the greater part of this period was devoted to the military problem, the problem of the Civil War, which seemed unsolvable to all the faint-hearted, not to speak of the parties of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries and other petty-bourgeois democrats, and to all the intermediate elements; this induced them to declare quite sincerely that the problem could not be solved, that Russia was backward and enfeebled and could not vanquish the capitalist system of the entire world, seeing that the revolution in the West had been delayed. And we therefore had to maintain our position and to declare with absolute firmness and conviction that we would win, we had to implement the slogans "Everything for victory!" "Everything for the war!"

To carry out these slogans it was necessary to deliberately and openly leave some of the most essential needs unsatisfied, and time and again to deny assistance to many, in the conviction that all forces had to be concentrated on the war, and that we had to win the war which the Entente had forced upon us. It was only because of the Party's vigilance and its strict discipline, because the authority of the Party united all government departments and institutions, because the slogans issued by the Central Committee were adopted by tens, hundreds, thousands

and finally millions of people as one man, because incredible sacrifices were made—it was only because of all this that the miracle which occurred was made possible. It was only because of all this that we were able to win in spite of the campaigns of the imperialists of the Entente and of the whole world having been repeated twice, thrice and even four times. And, of course, we not only stress this aspect of the matter; we must also bear in mind that it teaches us that without discipline and centralisation we would never have accomplished this task. The incredible sacrifices that we have made in order to save the country from counter-revolution and in order to ensure the victory of the Russian revolution over Denikin, Yudenich and Kolchak are a guarantee of the world social revolution. To achieve this, we had to have Party discipline, the strictest centralisation and the absolute certainty that the untold sacrifices of tens and hundreds of thousands of people would help us to accomplish all these tasks, and that it really could be done, could be accomplished. And for this purpose it was essential that our Party and the class which is exercising the dictatorship, the working class, should serve as elements uniting millions upon millions of working people in Russia and all over the world.

If we give some thought to what, after all, was the underlying reason for this historical miracle, why a weak, exhausted and backward country was able to defeat the most powerful countries in the world, we shall find that it was centralisation, discipline and unparalleled self-sacrifice. On what basis? Millions of working people in a country that was anything but educated could achieve this organisation, discipline and centralisation only because the workers had passed through the school of capitalism and had been united by capitalism, because the proletariat in all the advanced countries has united—and united the more, the more advanced the country; and on the other hand, because property, capitalist property, small property under commodity production, disunites. Property disunites, whereas we are uniting, and increasingly uniting, millions of working people all over the world. This is now clear even to the blind, one might say, or at least to those who will not see. Our enemies grew more and more disunited

as time went on. They were disunited by capitalist property, by private property under commodity production, whether they were small proprietors who profiteered by selling surplus grain at exorbitant prices and enriched themselves at the expense of the starving workers, or the capitalists of the various countries, even though they possessed military might and were creating a League of Nations, a "great united league" of all the foremost nations of the world. Unity of this kind is a sheer fiction, a sheer fraud, a sheer lie. And we have seen—and this was a great example—that this notorious League of Nations, which attempted to hand out mandates for the government of states, to divide up the world—that this notorious alliance proved to be a soap-bubble which at once burst, because it was an alliance founded on capitalist property. We have seen this on a vast historical scale, and it confirms that fundamental truth which told us that our cause was just, that the victory of the October Revolution was absolutely certain, and that the cause we were embarking on was one to which, despite all difficulties and obstacles, millions and millions of working people in all countries would rally. We knew that we had allies, that it was only necessary for the one country to which history had presented this honourable and most difficult task to display a spirit of self-sacrifice, for these incredible sacrifices to be repaid a hundredfold—every month we held out in our country would win us millions and millions of allies in all countries of the world.

If, after all, we give some thought to the reason why we were able to win, were bound to win, we shall find that it was only because all our enemies—who were formally tied by all sorts of bonds to the most powerful governments and capitalists in the world—however united they may have been formally, actually turned out to be disunited. Their internal bond in fact disunited them, pitted them against each other. Capitalist property disintegrated them, transformed them from allies into savage beasts, so that they failed to see that Soviet Russia was increasing the number of her followers among the British soldiers who had been landed in Archangel, among the French sailors in Sevastopol, among the workers of all countries, of all

the advanced countries without exception, where the social-compromisers took the side of capital. In the final analysis this was the fundamental reason, the underlying reason, that made our victory certain and which is still the chief, insuperable and inexhaustible source of our strength; and it permits us to affirm that when we in our country achieve the dictatorship of the proletariat in full measure, and the maximum unity of its forces, through its vanguard, its advanced party, we may expect the world revolution. And this in fact is an expression of will, an expression of the proletarian determination to fight; it is an expression of the proletarian determination to achieve an alliance of millions upon millions of workers of all countries.

The bourgeoisie and the pseudo-socialist gentry of the Second International have declared this to be mere propagandist talk. But it is not, it is historical reality, borne out by the bloody and painful experience of the Civil War in Russia. For this Civil War was a war against world capital; and world capital disintegrated of itself, devoured itself, amidst strife, whereas we, in a country where the proletariat was perishing from hunger and typhus, emerged more hardened and stronger than ever. In this country we won the support of increasing numbers of working people. What the compromisers formerly regarded as propagandist talk and the bourgeoisie were accustomed to sneer at, has been transformed in these years of our revolution, and particularly in the year under review, into an absolute and indisputable historical fact, which enables us to say with the most positive conviction that our having accomplished this is evidence that we possess a world-wide basis, immeasurably wider than was the case in any previous revolution. We have an international alliance, an alliance which has nowhere been registered, which has never been given formal embodiment, which from the point of view of "constitutional law" means nothing, but which, in the disintegrating capitalist world, actually means everything. Every month that we gained positions, or merely held out against an incredibly powerful enemy, proved to the whole world that we were right and brought us millions of new supporters.

This process has been a difficult one; it has been accom-

panied by tremendous defeats. In this very year under review the monstrous White terror in Finland⁸⁵ was followed by the defeat of the Hungarian revolution,⁸⁶ which was stifled by the governments of the Entente countries that deceived their parliaments and concluded a secret treaty with Rumania.

It was the vilest piece of treachery, this conspiracy of the international Entente to crush the Hungarian revolution by means of a White terror, not to mention the fact that in order to strangle the German revolution they were ready for any understanding with the German compromisers, and that these people, who had declared Liebknecht to be an honest German, pounced on this honest German like mad dogs together with the German imperialists. They exceeded all conceivable bounds; but every such act of suppression on their part only strengthened and consolidated us, while it undermined them.

And it seems to me that we must first and foremost draw a lesson from this fundamental experience. Here we must make a special point of basing our agitation and propaganda on an analysis, an explanation of why we were victorious, why the sacrifices made in the Civil War have been repaid a hundredfold, and how we must act, on the basis of this experience, in order to succeed in another war, a war on a bloodless front, a war which has only changed its form, but which is being waged against us by those same representatives, lackeys and leaders of the old capitalist world, only still more vigorously, still more furiously, still more zealously. More than any other, our revolution has proved the rule that the strength of a revolution, the vigour of its assault, its energy, determination, its victory and its triumph intensify the resistance of the bourgeoisie. The more victorious we are the more the capitalist exploiters learn to unite and the more determined their onslaught. For, as you all distinctly remember—it was not so long ago when judged by the passage of time, but a long time ago when judged by the march of events—at the beginning of the October Revolution Bolshevism was regarded as a freak; this view, which was a reflection of the feeble development and weakness of the proletarian revolution, very soon had to be abandoned

in Russia and has now been abandoned in Europe as well. Bolshevism has become a world-wide phenomenon, the workers' revolution has raised its head. The Soviet system, in creating which in October we followed the traditions of 1905, developing our own experience—this Soviet system has become a phenomenon of world-historic importance.

Two camps are now quite consciously facing each other all over the world; this may be said without the slightest exaggeration. It should be noted that only this year have they become locked in a decisive and final struggle. And now, at the time of this very Congress, we are passing through what is perhaps one of the greatest, most acute but not yet completed periods of transition from war to peace.

You all know what happened to the leaders of the imperialist powers of the Entente who loudly announced to the whole world: "We shall never stop fighting those usurpers, those bandits, those arrogators of power, those enemies of democracy, those Bolsheviks"—you know that first they lifted the blockade, that their attempt to unite the small states failed, because we succeeded in winning over not only the workers of all countries, but also the bourgeoisie of the small countries, for the imperialists oppress not only the workers of their own countries but the bourgeoisie of the small states as well. You know that we won over the vacillating bourgeoisie in the advanced countries. And the present position is that the Entente is breaking its former promises and assurances and is violating the treaties which, incidentally, it concluded dozens of times with various Russian whiteguards. And now, as far as these treaties are concerned, the Entente is the loser, for it squandered hundreds of millions on them but failed to complete the job.

It has now lifted the blockade and has virtually begun peace negotiations with the Soviet Republic. But it is not completing these negotiations, and therefore the small states have lost faith in it and in its might. So we see that the position of the Entente, its position in foreign affairs, defies all definition from the standpoint of the customary concepts of law. The states of the Entente are neither at

peace with the Bolsheviks nor at war with them; they have recognised us and they have not recognised us. And this utter confusion among our opponents, who were so convinced that they represented something, proves that they represent nothing but a pack of capitalist beasts who have fallen out among themselves and are absolutely incapable of doing us any harm.

The position today is that Latvia has officially made peace proposals to us. Finland has sent a telegram which officially speaks of a demarcation line but actually implies a swing to a policy of peace.⁸⁷ Lastly, Poland, the Poland whose representatives have been, and still are, sabre-rattling so vigorously, the Poland that has been, and still is receiving so many trainloads of artillery and promises of help in everything, if only she would continue the war with Russia—even Poland, the unstable position of whose government compels her to consent to any military gamble, has invited us to begin negotiations for peace.⁸⁸ We must be extremely cautious. Our policy demands the most careful thought. Here it is hardest of all to find the proper policy, for nobody as yet knows on what track the train is standing; the enemy himself does not know what he is going to do next. The gentlemen who represent French policy and who are most zealous in egging Poland on, and the leaders of landowner and bourgeois Poland do not know what will happen next; they do not know what they want. Today they say, "Gentlemen, let us have a few trainloads of guns and a few hundred millions and we are prepared to fight the Bolsheviks." They are hushing up the news of the strikes that are spreading in Poland; they are tightening up the censorship so as to conceal the truth. But the revolutionary movement in Poland is growing. The spread of revolution in Germany, in its new phase, in its new stage, now that the workers, after the German Kornilov-type putsch,⁸⁹ are creating Red Armies, plainly shows (as can be seen from the recent dispatches from Germany) that the temper of the workers is rising more and more. The Polish bourgeoisie and land-owners are themselves beginning to wonder whether it is not too late, whether there will not be a Soviet Republic in Poland before the government acts either for war or for

peace. They do not know what to do. They do not know what the morrow will bring.

But we know that our forces are growing vastly every month, and will grow even more in future. The result is that our international position is now more stable than ever. But we must watch the international crisis with extreme care and be prepared for any eventuality. We have received a formal offer of peace from Poland. These gentlemen are in desperate straits, so desperate that their friends, the German monarchists, people with better training and more political experience and knowledge, plunged into a venturesome gamble, a Kornilov-type putsch. The Polish bourgeoisie are throwing out offers of peace because they know that any venturesome gamble may prove to be a Polish Kornilov-type affair. Knowing that our enemy is in desperate straits, that our enemy does not know what he wants to do or what he will do tomorrow, we must tell ourselves quite definitely that in spite of the peace overtures war is possible. It is impossible to foretell what their future conduct will be. We have seen these people before, we know these Kerenskys, these Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries. During the past two years we have seen them one day drawn towards Kolchak, the next day almost towards the Bolsheviks, and then towards Denikin—and all this camouflaged by talk about freedom and democracy. We know these gentlemen, and therefore we grasp at the proposal of peace with both hands and are prepared to make the maximum concessions, in the conviction that the conclusion of peace with the small states will further our cause infinitely more than war. For the imperialists used war to deceive the working masses, they used it to conceal the truth about Soviet Russia. Any peace, therefore, will open channels for our influence a hundred times wider, which, as it is, has grown considerably in these past few years. The Third, Communist International has achieved unparalleled successes. But at the same time we know that war may be forced upon us any day. Our enemies do not themselves know as yet what they are capable of doing in this respect.

That war preparations are under way, of that there is not the slightest doubt. Many of the states bordering on

Russia—and perhaps many of those not bordering on Russia—are now arming. That is why we must manoeuvre so flexibly in our international policy and adhere so firmly to the course we have taken, that is why we must be prepared for anything. We have waged the war for peace with extreme vigour. This war is yielding splendid results. We have made a very good showing in this sphere of the struggle, at any rate, not inferior to the showing made by the Red Army on the front where blood is being shed. But the conclusion of peace with us does not depend on the will of the small states even if they desire it. They are up to their ears in debt to the countries of the Entente, who are wrangling and competing desperately among themselves. We must therefore remember that peace is of course possible from the point of view of the world situation, the historical situation created by the Civil War and by the war against the Entente.

But the measures we take for peace must be accompanied by intensified preparedness for defence, and in no case must our army be disarmed. Our army offers a real guarantee that the imperialist powers will not make the slightest attempt or encroachment on us; for although they might count on certain ephemeral successes at first, not one of them would escape defeat at the hands of Soviet Russia. That we must realise, that must be made the basis of our agitation and propaganda, that is what we must prepare for, in order to solve the problem which, in view of our growing fatigue, compels us to combine the one with the other.

Published in the book
*Ninth Congress of the Russian
Communist Party. Verbatim
Report, Moscow, 1920*

*Collected Works, Vol. 30,
pp. 445-53*

LETTER TO THE BRITISH WORKERS⁹⁰

Comrades:

First of all permit me to thank you for sending your delegation here to acquaint themselves with Soviet Russia. When your delegation suggested to me that I should send a letter through them to the British workers and perhaps also proposals to the British Government, I replied that I gratefully accepted the first suggestion but that I must address myself to the government, not through a workers' delegation but directly, on behalf of our government, through Comrade Chicherin. We have on very many occasions addressed ourselves this way to the British Government, making the most formal and solemn proposals to start peace talks. All our representatives—Comrade Litvinov, Comrade Krasin and the rest—are unceasingly continuing to make these proposals. The British Government stubbornly refuses to accept them. It is not surprising, therefore, that I desired to speak to the delegates of the British workers exclusively as delegates of the workers, not as a representative of the government of Soviet Russia, but simply as a Communist.

I was not surprised to find that several members of your delegation hold a standpoint, not of the working class but of the bourgeoisie, of the exploiting class: in all capitalist countries the imperialist war fully revealed an old ulcer, namely, the desertion of the majority of the workers' parliamentary and trade union leaders to the side of the bourgeoisie. On the false pretext of "defence of country" they were actually defending the predatory in-

terests of either of the two groups of robbers of the entire world—the Anglo-American-French group, or the German group; they entered into an alliance with the bourgeoisie, against the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat; they covered up this treachery with sentimental petty-bourgeois reformist and pacifist phrases about peaceful evolution, constitutional methods, democracy, etc. This is what happened in all countries; it is not surprising that in Britain this state of affairs has also been reflected in the composition of your delegation.

Members of your delegation, Shaw and Guest—obviously surprised and hurt by my statement that Britain, notwithstanding our peace proposals and notwithstanding the declarations of her government, is continuing her intervention, waging war against us and helping Wrangel in the Crimea and whiteguard Poland—asked me whether I had proof of this, and whether I could show how many trainloads of military supplies Britain had provided Poland with, etc. I replied that, to obtain the secret treaties of the British Government, it was necessary to overthrow it in a revolutionary manner and to seize all its foreign policy documents in the same way as we did in 1917. Any educated man, anybody sincerely interested in politics, was aware even prior to our revolution that the tsar had secret treaties with the predatory governments of Britain, France, America, Italy and Japan concerning the division of the spoils, concerning Constantinople, Galicia, Armenia, Syria, Mesopotamia, etc. Only liars and hypocrites (excluding, of course, absolutely ignorant, backward and illiterate people) could deny this, or pretend not to know of this. However, without a revolution, we could never have obtained the secret documents of the predatory governments of the capitalist class. Those leaders or representatives of the British proletariat—whether they are members of Parliament, trade union leaders, journalists, or others—who pretend ignorance of the secret treaties between Britain, France, America, Italy, Japan and Poland concerning the plunder of other countries, concerning the division of the spoils, and who do not wage a revolutionary struggle in order to expose these treaties, are merely once again showing that they are faithful servants of the capi-

talists. We have known this for a long time; we are exposing this in our own country and in all other countries of the world. The visit to Russia of a delegation of the British workers will hasten the exposure of such leaders in Britain too.

I had a conversation with your delegation on Wednesday, May 26. On the following day telegrams arrived stating that Bonar Law had admitted in the British Parliament that military aid had been given to Poland in October, "for defence against Russia" (of course only for defence, and only in October! There are still "influential labour leaders" in Britain who are helping the capitalists to dupe the workers!), but the *New Statesman*, the most moderate of moderate petty-bourgeois newspapers or journals, wrote of tanks being supplied to Poland, which were more powerful than those used against the Germans during the war. After this, can one refrain from ridiculing such "leaders" of the British workers that ask with an air of injured innocence whether there is any "proof" that Britain is fighting against Russia and is helping Poland and the whiteguards in the Crimea?

Members of the delegation asked me which I considered more important: the formation in Britain of a consistently revolutionary Communist Party, or obtaining the immediate aid of the masses of the workers in Britain for the cause of peace with Russia. I replied that this is a matter of one's convictions. Sincere supporters of the emancipation of the workers from the yoke of capital cannot possibly be opposed to the formation of a Communist Party, which alone is capable of training the workers in a non-bourgeois and non-petty-bourgeois manner, and is alone capable of genuinely exposing, ridiculing and disgracing "leaders" who can doubt whether Britain is helping Poland, etc. There is no need to fear the Communists will be too numerous in Britain, because there is not even a small Communist Party there. But if anyone continues to remain in intellectual slavery to the bourgeoisie, and continues to share petty-bourgeois prejudices about "democracy" (*bourgeois* democracy), pacifism, etc., then of course such people would only do more harm to the proletariat if they took it into their heads to call themselves Com-

munists and affiliate to the Third International. All that these people are capable of doing is to pass sentimental "resolutions" against intervention couched exclusively in philistine phrases. In a certain sense these resolutions are also useful, namely, in the sense that the old "leaders" (adherents of bourgeois democracy, of peaceful methods, etc., etc.) will make themselves ridiculous in the eyes of the masses, and the more they pass empty, non-committal resolutions unaccompanied by revolutionary action, the sooner will they expose themselves. Let each man stick to his job: let the Communists work directly through their Party, awakening the revolutionary consciousness of the workers. Let those who supported the "defence of country" during the imperialist war for the partitioning of the world, "defence" of the secret treaty between the British capitalists and the tsar to plunder Turkey, let those who "do not see" that Britain is helping Poland and the white-guards in Russia—let such people hasten to increase the number of their "peace resolutions" to the point of becoming ridiculous; the more they do that, the sooner will they meet with the fate of Kerensky, the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries in Russia.

Several members of your delegation questioned me with surprise about the Red terror, about the absence of freedom of the press in Russia, of freedom of assembly, about our persecution of Mensheviks and pro-Menshevik workers, etc. My reply was that the real cause of the terror is the British imperialists and their "allies", who practised and are still practising a White terror in Finland and in Hungary, in India and in Ireland, who have been supporting Yudenich, Kolchak, Denikin, Pilsudski and Wrangel. Our Red terror is a defence of the working class against the exploiters, the crushing of resistance from the exploiters with whom the Socialist-Revolutionaries, the Mensheviks and an insignificant number of pro-Menshevik workers have sided. Freedom of the press and assembly under bourgeois democracy is freedom for the wealthy to conspire against the working people, freedom for the capitalists to bribe and buy up the press. I have explained this in newspaper articles so often that I have derived no pleasure in repeating myself.

Two days after my talk with your delegation, the newspapers reported that, besides the arrests of Monatte and Loriot in France, Sylvia Pankhurst had been arrested in Britain. This is the best possible reply the British Government could give to a question that the non-Communist British labour "leaders", who are captives to bourgeois prejudices, are afraid even to ask, namely, which class the terror is directed against—the oppressed and exploited, or the oppressors and exploiters? Is it a question of the "freedom" of the capitalists to rob, deceive and dupe the working people, or of the "freedom" of the toilers from the yoke of the capitalists, the speculators and the property-owners? Comrade Sylvia Pankhurst represents the interests of hundreds upon hundreds of millions of people that are oppressed by the British and other capitalists. That is why she is subjected to a White terror, has been deprived of liberty, etc. The labour "leaders" who pursue a non-Communist policy are 99 per cent representatives of the bourgeoisie, of its deceit, its prejudices.

In conclusion, I want to thank you once again, comrades, for having sent your delegation here. Despite the hostility of many of the delegates towards the Soviet system and the dictatorship of the proletariat, and although many of them are in the grip of bourgeois prejudices, their acquaintance with Soviet Russia will inevitably accelerate the collapse of capitalism throughout the world.

N. Lenin

30.5.1920

Pravda No. 130,
June 17, 1920

Collected Works, Vol. 31,
pp. 139-43

**PRELIMINARY DRAFT THESES
ON THE NATIONAL AND THE COLONIAL
QUESTIONS⁹¹**

For the Second Congress of the Communist International

In submitting for discussion by the Second Congress of the Communist International the following draft theses on the national and colonial questions I would request all comrades, especially those who possess concrete information on any of these very complex problems, to let me have their opinions, amendments, addenda and concrete remarks *in the most concise form (no more than two or three pages)*, particularly on the following points:

Austrian experience;
Polish-Jewish and Ukrainian experience;
Alsace-Lorraine and Belgium;
Ireland;
Danish-German, Italo-French and Italo-Slav relations;
Balkan experience;
Eastern peoples;
The struggle against Pan-Islamism;
Relations in the Caucasus;
The Bashkir and Tatar Republics;
Kirghizia;
Turkestan, its experience;
Negroes in America;
Colonies;
China-Korea-Japan.

N. Lenin

June 5, 1920

1) An abstract or formal posing of the problem of equality in general and national equality in particular is in the very nature of bourgeois democracy. Under the guise of the equality of the individual in general, bourgeois democracy proclaims the formal or legal equality of the property-owner and the proletarian, the exploiter and the exploited, thereby grossly deceiving the oppressed classes. On the plea that all men are absolutely equal, the bourgeoisie is transforming the idea of equality, which is itself a reflection of relations in commodity production, into a weapon in its struggle against the abolition of classes. The real meaning of the demand for equality consists in its being a demand for the abolition of classes.

2) In conformity with its fundamental task of combatting bourgeois democracy and exposing its falseness and hypocrisy, the Communist Party, as the avowed champion of the proletarian struggle to overthrow the bourgeois yoke, must base its policy, in the national question too, not on abstract and formal principles but, first, on a precise appraisal of the specific historical situation and, primarily, of economic conditions; second, on a clear distinction between the interests of the oppressed classes, of working and exploited people, and the general concept of national interests as a whole, which implies the interests of the ruling class; third, on an equally clear distinction between the oppressed, dependent and subject nations and the oppressing, exploiting and sovereign nations, in order to counter the bourgeois-democratic lies that play down this colonial and financial enslavement of the vast majority of the world's population by an insignificant minority of the richest and advanced capitalist countries, a feature characteristic of the era of finance capital and imperialism.

3) The imperialist war of 1914-18 has very clearly revealed to all nations and to the oppressed classes of the whole world the falseness of bourgeois-democratic phrases, by practically demonstrating that the Treaty of Versailles of the celebrated "Western democracies" is an even more brutal and foul act of violence against weak nations than was the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk of the German Junkers and the Kaiser. The League of Nations and the

entire post-war policy of the Entente reveal this truth with even greater clarity and distinctness. They are everywhere intensifying the revolutionary struggle both of the proletariat in the advanced countries and of the toiling masses in the colonial and dependent countries. They are hastening the collapse of the petty-bourgeois nationalist illusions that nations can live together in peace and equality under capitalism.

4) From these fundamental premises it follows that the Communist International's entire policy on the national and colonial questions should rest primarily on a closer union of the proletarians and the working masses of all nations and countries for a joint revolutionary struggle to overthrow the landowners and the bourgeoisie. This union alone will guarantee victory over capitalism, without which the abolition of national oppression and inequality is impossible.

5) The world political situation has now placed the dictatorship of the proletariat on the order of the day. World political developments are of necessity concentrated on a single focus—the struggle of the world bourgeoisie against the Soviet Russian Republic, around which are inevitably grouped, on the one hand, the Soviet movements of the advanced workers in all countries, and, on the other, all the national liberation movements in the colonies and among the oppressed nationalities, who are learning from bitter experience that their only salvation lies in the Soviet system's victory over world imperialism.

6) Consequently, one cannot at present confine oneself to a bare recognition or proclamation of the need for closer union between the working people of the various nations; a policy must be pursued that will achieve the closest alliance, with Soviet Russia, of all the national and colonial liberation movements. The form of this alliance should be determined by the degree of development of the communist movement among the proletariat of each country, or of the bourgeois-democratic liberation movement of the workers and peasants in backward countries or among backward nationalities.

7) Federation is a transitional form to the complete unity of the working people of different nations. The fea-

sibility of federation has already been demonstrated in practice both by the relations between the R.S.F.S.R. and other Soviet Republics (the Hungarian, Finnish and Latvian in the past, and the Azerbaijan and Ukrainian at present), and by the relations within the R.S.F.S.R. in respect of nationalities which formerly enjoyed neither statehood nor autonomy (e.g., the Bashkir and Tatar autonomous republics in the R.S.F.S.R., founded in 1919 and 1920 respectively).

8) In this respect, it is the task of the Communist International to further develop and also to study and test by experience these new federations, which are arising on the basis of the Soviet system and the Soviet movement. In recognising that federation is a transitional form to complete unity, it is necessary to strive for ever closer federal unity, bearing in mind, first, that the Soviet republics, surrounded as they are by the imperialist powers of the whole world—which from the military standpoint are immeasurably stronger—cannot possibly continue to exist without the closest alliance; second, that a close economic alliance between the Soviet republics is necessary, otherwise the productive forces which have been ruined by imperialism cannot be restored and the well-being of the working people cannot be ensured; third, that there is a tendency towards the creation of a single world economy, regulated by the proletariat of all nations as an integral whole and according to a common plan. This tendency has already revealed itself quite clearly under capitalism and is bound to be further developed and consummated under socialism.

9) The Communist International's national policy in the sphere of relations within the state cannot be restricted to the bare, formal, purely declaratory and actually non-committal recognition of the equality of nations to which the bourgeois democrats confine themselves—both those who frankly admit being such, and those who assume the name of socialists (such as the socialists of the Second International).

In all their propaganda and agitation—both within parliament and outside it—the Communist parties must consistently expose that constant violation of the equality of

nations and of the guaranteed rights of national minorities which is to be seen in all capitalist countries, despite their "democratic" constitutions. It is also necessary, first, constantly to explain that only the Soviet system is capable of ensuring genuine equality of nations, by uniting first the proletarians and then the whole mass of the working population in the struggle against the bourgeoisie; and, second, that all Communist parties should render direct aid to the revolutionary movements among the dependent and underprivileged nations (for example, Ireland, the American Negroes, etc.) and in the colonies.

Without the latter condition, which is particularly important, the struggle against the oppression of dependent nations and colonies, as well as recognition of their right to secede, are but a false signboard, as is evidenced by the parties of the Second International.

10) Recognition of internationalism in word, and its replacement in deed by petty-bourgeois nationalism and pacifism, in all propaganda, agitation and practical work, is very common, not only among the parties of the Second International, but also among those which have withdrawn from it, and often even among parties which now call themselves communist. The urgency of the struggle against this evil, against the most deep-rooted petty-bourgeois national prejudices, looms ever larger with the mounting exigency of the task of converting the dictatorship of the proletariat from a national dictatorship (i.e., existing in a single country and incapable of determining world politics) into an international one (i.e., a dictatorship of the proletariat involving at least several advanced countries, and capable of exercising a decisive influence upon world politics as a whole). Petty-bourgeois nationalism proclaims as internationalism the mere recognition of the equality of nations, and nothing more. Quite apart from the fact that this recognition is purely verbal, petty-bourgeois nationalism preserves national self-interest intact, whereas proletarian internationalism demands, first, that the interests of the proletarian struggle in any one country should be subordinated to the interests of that struggle on a world-wide scale, and, second, that a nation which is achieving victory over the bourgeoisie should be able and

willing to make the greatest national sacrifices for the overthrow of international capital.

Thus, in countries that are already fully capitalist and have workers' parties that really act as the vanguard of the proletariat, the struggle against opportunist and petty-bourgeois pacifist distortions of the concept and policy of internationalism is a primary and cardinal task.

11) With regard to the more backward states and nations, in which feudal or patriarchal and patriarchal-peasant relations predominate, it is particularly important to bear in mind:

first, that all Communist parties must assist the bourgeois-democratic liberation movement in these countries, and that the duty of rendering the most active assistance rests primarily with the workers of the country the backward nation is colonially or financially dependent on;

second, the need for a struggle against the clergy and other influential reactionary and medieval elements in backward countries;

third, the need to combat Pan-Islamism and similar trends, which strive to combine the liberation movement against European and American imperialism with an attempt to strengthen the positions of the khans, landowners, mullahs, etc.;

fourth, the need, in backward countries, to give special support to the peasant movement against the landowners, against landed proprietorship, and against all manifestations or survivals of feudalism, and to strive to lend the peasant movement the most revolutionary character by establishing the closest possible alliance between the West-European communist proletariat and the revolutionary peasant movement in the East, in the colonies, and in the backward countries generally. It is particularly necessary to exert every effort to apply the basic principles of the Soviet system in countries where pre-capitalist relations predominate—by setting up “working people’s Soviets”, etc.;

fifth, the need for a determined struggle against attempts to give a communist colouring to bourgeois-democratic

* In the proofs Lenin inserted a brace opposite points 2 and 3 and wrote “2 and 3 to be united”.—Ed.

liberation trends in the backward countries; the Communist International should support bourgeois-democratic national movements in colonial and backward countries only on condition that, in these countries, the elements of future proletarian parties, which will be communist not only in name, are brought together and trained to understand their special tasks, i.e., those of the struggle against the bourgeois-democratic movements within their own nations. The Communist International must enter into a temporary alliance with bourgeois democracy in the colonial and backward countries, but should not merge with it, and should under all circumstances uphold the independence of the proletarian movement even if it is in its most embryonic form;

sixth, the need constantly to explain and expose among the broadest working masses of all countries, and particularly of the backward countries, the deception systematically practised by the imperialist powers, which, under the guise of politically independent states, set up states that are wholly dependent upon them economically, financially and militarily. Under present-day international conditions there is no salvation for dependent and weak nations except in a union of Soviet republics.

12) The age-old oppression of colonial and weak nationalities by the imperialist powers has not only filled the working masses of the oppressed countries with animosity towards the oppressor nations, but has also aroused distrust in these nations in general, even in their proletariat. The despicable betrayal of socialism by the majority of the official leaders of this proletariat in 1914-19, when "defence of country" was used as a social-chauvinist cloak to conceal the defence of the "right" of their "own" bourgeoisie to oppress colonies and fleece financially dependent countries, was certain to enhance this perfectly legitimate distrust. On the other hand, the more backward the country, the stronger is the hold of small-scale agricultural production, patriarchalism and isolation, which inevitably lend particular strength and tenacity to the deepest of petty-bourgeois prejudices, i.e., to national egoism and national narrow-mindedness. These prejudices are bound to die out very slowly, for they can disappear only after im-

perialism and capitalism have disappeared in the advanced countries, and after the entire foundation of the backward countries' economic life has radically changed. It is therefore the duty of the class-conscious communist proletariat of all countries to regard with particular caution and attention the survivals of national sentiments in the countries and among nationalities which have been oppressed the longest; it is equally necessary to make certain concessions with a view to more rapidly overcoming this distrust and these prejudices. Complete victory over capitalism cannot be won unless the proletariat and, following it, the mass of working people in all countries and nations throughout the world voluntarily strive for alliance and unity.

Published in June 1920

Collected Works, Vol. 31,
pp. 144-51

**FROM THE SPEECH
DELIVERED AT THE SECOND ALL-RUSSIA
CONFERENCE OF ORGANISERS RESPONSIBLE
FOR RURAL WORK
JUNE 12, 1920⁹²**

As regards the Republic's international standing, you are of course well aware of the main facts about the Polish offensive. An incredible number of lies are being spread on this subject abroad, due to the so-called freedom of the press, which consists in all the most important organs of the press abroad being bought up by the capitalists, and being filled 99 per cent with articles by mercenary hacks. That is what they call freedom of the press, due to which there is no limit to the lies that are being spread. With regard to the Polish offensive in particular, they are trying to make out that the Bolsheviks presented impossible demands to Poland and launched an offensive, whereas you all know very well that we fully consented even to the immense frontiers held by the Poles before the offensive began. We set more store by the lives of our Red Army men than by a war for Byelorussia and Lithuania, which the Poles had seized. We declared in the most solemn terms—not only in the name of the Council of People's Commissars, but also in a special manifesto of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, the supreme body in the Soviet Republic—we declared to the Polish Government, to the bourgeois and landowner government, besides appealing to the Polish workers and peasants, that we proposed negotiations for peace on the basis of the front that existed

at the time, i.e., the front that left Lithuania and Byelorussia—non-Polish territory—in the hands of the Poles. We were and still are convinced that the Polish landowners and capitalists will be unable to retain foreign territory, and that we shall gain more even from the most unfavourable peace, since we shall save the lives of our Red Army men, and every month of peace makes us ten times as strong, whereas to every other government, including the bourgeois government of Poland, every month of peace means greater and greater disintegration. Although our peace proposals were very far-reaching, and although certain very hasty and, as far as talking goes, highly revolutionary revolutionaries, even called our proposals Tolstoyan—when, as a matter of fact, the Bolsheviks' actions have, I think, shown sufficiently that there is not a jot of Tolstoyanism in us—we considered it our duty, in the face of such a thing as war, to show that we were prepared to make the maximum possible concessions, and especially to show that we would not wage war for boundaries for which so much blood had been spilt, since to us that was a matter of little significance.

We were prepared to make concessions no other government can make; we offered Poland territory which it would be useful to compare with that described in a document published yesterday, I think, and coming from the supreme organ of the Allies, the British, French and other imperialists, in which Poland's eastern frontiers are indicated.⁹³

These capitalists in Britain and France imagine that it is they who lay down boundaries. But, thank goodness, there are others besides them who do that—the workers and peasants have learnt to establish their boundaries themselves.

These capitalists have fixed the Polish boundaries much farther to the west than those we proposed. This document, coming from the Allies in Paris, is clear proof that they have arrived at a deal with Wrangel. They assure us that they want peace with Soviet Russia, that they support neither Poland nor Wrangel. We, however, say that it is an unscrupulous lie with which they are trying to shield themselves; for they say that they are not

supplying any more arms, when as a matter of fact they are supplying them just as they did several months ago. Today's reports state that rich trophies have been captured—a carload of new British machine guns; Comrade Trotsky reports that brand-new French cartridges were captured the other day. What other confirmation do we need that Poland is acting with the aid of British and French equipment, with the aid of British and French cartridges, that she is acting with the aid of British and French money? If they now declare that Poland will herself establish her eastern borders, then that is in consequence of a direct deal with Wrangel. That is obvious to anybody. The entire situation makes it perfectly clear that the Polish landowners and bourgeoisie are fighting exclusively with the aid of the British and the French. The latter, however, are lying brazenly, just as they did when they assured us that they had not sent Bullitt, until he finally returned to America and came out and published the documents he had gathered here.

These gentlemen, these capitalist tradesmen, cannot act contrary to their nature. That is obvious. They can only reason like tradesmen. When our diplomats do not act like tradesmen, and when we say that the lives of our Red Army men are more precious to us than any vast boundary changes they, of course, with their purely tradesmen's reasoning, cannot understand it. When, a year ago, we proposed to Bullitt a treaty which was extremely favourable to them and extremely unfavourable to us, a treaty that would have left huge territories in the hands of Denikin and Kolchak, we did so in the certainty that, if peace were concluded, the whiteguard government would never be able to retain power.

With their tradesmen's reasoning, they could only interpret this as a confession of our weakness. "If the Bolsheviks agree to such a peace," they argued, "it must mean that they are at their last gasp." And the bourgeois press exulted, the diplomats rubbed their hands with glee, and millions of pounds sterling were advanced to Kolchak and Denikin. True, they did not give them hard cash, but supplied them with arms at usurious prices, fully convinced that the Bolsheviks could not cope with them at all. The

upshot was that Kolchak and Denikin were routed and their hundreds of millions of pounds went up in smoke. We are now getting trainload after trainload of excellent British equipment; you can often meet entire divisions of Russian Red Army men clad in excellent British uniforms; the other day a comrade who arrived from the Caucasus told me that an entire division of Red Army men are wearing Italian bersaglieri uniforms. I am very sorry that I am unable to show you photographs of these Russian Red Army men clad in bersaglieri uniforms. All I can say is that, after all, the British equipment has been of some use and that Russian Red Army men are grateful to the British tradesmen who have fitted them out because they reasoned like tradesmen, and who have been thrashed, are being thrashed, and will be thrashed by the Bolsheviks time and time again. (*Applause.*)

We find the same thing with the Polish offensive. This is another instance of God (if he exists, of course) first depriving of reason those whom he would punish. The Entente is undoubtedly headed by very shrewd men, excellent politicians, yet these people commit folly after folly. They raise up against us one country after another, enabling us to smash them one by one. Why, if only they succeeded in uniting—and they do have the League of Nations and there is no corner of the earth to which their military power does not extend. Nobody, it would seem, could unite all the enemy forces better and launch them against the Soviets. Yet they cannot unite them. They go into battle part by part. They merely threaten, boast and bluff. Six months ago they declared that they had mustered fourteen states against the Soviets, and that in a matter of months they would be in Moscow and Petrograd. But today I received a pamphlet from Finland, containing the reminiscences of a certain whiteguard officer about the offensive against Petrograd; prior to that I received a statement of protest from several Russians of the Cadet brand, members of the North-Western Government, which tells of how certain British generals invited them to a conference and suggested to them through an interpreter, and sometimes in excellent Russian, that they should form a government right away, on the spot—a Russian government,

of course, a democratic government, it goes without saying, in the spirit of the Constituent Assembly—and how they were told to sign on the dotted line. And, though they were bitter enemies of the Bolsheviks, these Russian officers, these Cadets, were outraged by the brazen insolence of the British officers, who dictated to them, and ordered them, in a tone of a drill sergeant (and only like a Russian one can), to sign what they were told to—and they go on to relate how the whole affair fell through. I regret that we are unable to give extensive distribution to these documents, to these confessions of whiteguard officers who took part in the advance on Petrograd.

Why is that so? It is because their League of Nations is a league only in name; in fact it is a pack of wolves that are all the time at each other's throats and do not trust one another in the least.

As a matter of fact, they are even now boasting that Latvia, Rumania and Finland will join Poland in the attack; it is clear from the diplomatic negotiations that when Poland began her offensive the powers that were conducting peace negotiations with us changed their tone, and came out with statements whose insolence was sometimes amazing. They reason like tradesmen—and you cannot expect anything else from a tradesman. It seemed to them that this was the time to square accounts with Soviet Russia, so they turned high and mighty. Let them do so. We have seen the same thing in the case of other states, far bigger ones, but we have paid no heed to that because, as experience has shown, all the threats from Finland, Rumania, Latvia and the other bourgeois states that are wholly dependent on the Entente, have come to nought. Poland signed a treaty only with Petlyura, a general without an army, which has evoked even greater bitterness among the Ukrainian population and has induced more and more semi-bourgeois elements to side with Soviet Russia. So, once again, instead of a general offensive, you have isolated action by Poland alone. And now we see that although our forces had to spend a lot of time on the move because they were farther away from the frontiers than the Poles were and we needed more time to bring up our troops, the latter have begun to advance. Some days

ago our cavalry captured Zhitomir. Our forces have cut the last road linking Kiev with the Polish front both in the south and the north, which means that the Poles have lost Kiev irrevocably. At the same time we learn that Skólski has resigned, that the Polish Government are in a state of uncertainty and agitation and are already declaring that they will offer us new peace terms. Just as you please, you landowner and capitalist gentlemen! We will give the Polish peace terms due consideration. What we see is that their government are waging war against the wishes of their own bourgeoisie; that the Polish National Democrats,⁹⁴ who correspond to our Cadets and Octobrists⁹⁵—the most bitter counter-revolutionary landowners and bourgeois—are opposed to the war, for they realise that they cannot win such a war, and that it is being run by Polish adventurers, by the Socialist-Revolutionaries, the Polish Socialist Party, people marked most by features characterising the Socialist-Revolutionaries, namely, revolutionary talk, boastfulness, patriotism, chauvinism, buffoonery and sheer claptrap. We are familiar with such people. When, after they have bitten off more than they can chew in this war, they begin to reshuffle their Cabinet and to say that they propose peace talks to us, we say: "Just as you please, gentlemen, have a try. We, however, are counting only on the Polish workers and peasants. We shall also talk peace, only not with you, the Polish landowners and bourgeois, but with the Polish workers and peasants, and we shall see what will come of such negotiations."

Comrades, despite the successes we are gaining on the Polish front, the position at present demands every effort of us. The most dangerous thing in a war that breaks out in conditions like those in the present war with Poland is to underrate the enemy and to reassure ourselves with the thought that we are the stronger. That is a most dangerous thing, which may lead to defeat in the war; it is the worst feature in the Russian character, which expresses itself in enervation and flabbiness. It is important, not only to begin but to carry on and hold out; that is what we Russians are not good at. Only by long training, through a proletarian disciplined struggle against all wavering and

vacillation, only through such endurance can the Russian working masses be brought to rid themselves of this bad habit.

We have given Kolchak, Denikin and Yudenich a sound thrashing, but we have not yet finished the job. Wrangel is still in the Crimea. We said to ourselves: "Well, now we are the stronger"—and that has led to instance after instance of slackness and slovenliness. Meanwhile, Wrangel is receiving aid from Great Britain. This is done through traders, but it cannot be proved. Only the other day he landed troops and captured Melitopol. True, according to the latest reports we have re-captured it; but in this case, too, we had let it slip from our hands most shamefully just because we were strong. Just because Yudenich, Kolchak and Denikin have been smashed, the Russian begins to reveal his nature and take things easy, with the result that we let things slide. His slovenliness leads to tens of thousands of his comrades losing their lives. Here is a fundamental Russian trait: when not a single job has been carried through to the end he is apt to let things slide unless he is prodded. This trait must be ruthlessly combated, for it leads to tens of thousands of the finest Red Army men and peasants losing their lives, and the continued sufferings of famine. And so, though we are stronger than the Poles, our slogan in the war that has been imposed on us must be—an end to all slackness! Since war has proved inevitable, everything must be devoted to the war effort; the least slackness or lack of drive must be punished by wartime laws. War means war, and let nobody in the rear or in any peaceful occupation dare shirk his duty!

The slogan must be—everything for the war effort! Otherwise we shall be unable to cope with the Polish nobles and bourgeoisie. To finish with this war, we must teach a conclusive lesson to the last of the neighbouring powers that still dares to play at this game. We must give them so severe a lesson that they will warn their children, their grandchildren and their great-grandchildren to refrain from such things. (*Applause.*) And so, comrades, at every meeting, assembly and business conference, in all groups at all party institutions and on all executive bodies, it is the

prime duty of those who are working in the countryside, of propagandists and agitators, and all the comrades engaged in any field of peaceful labour to give top priority and full effect to the slogan: "Everything for the war effort!"

Until complete victory is won in this war, we must guarantee ourselves against the errors and follies we have been committing for years. I do not know how many mistakes a Russian has to make before he learns his lesson. We once believed the war over before we had dealt the enemy his death blow, leaving Wrangel in the Crimea. I repeat the slogan, "Everything for the war effort!" must be the chief item on the agenda at every conference, at every meeting, on every executive body.

We must ask ourselves: have we bent every effort, have we made every sacrifice to bring the war to an end? This is a question of saving the lives of tens of thousands of our finest comrades, who are perishing at the front, in the foremost ranks. It is a matter of saving ourselves from the famine which is imminent just because we are not fighting the war to a finish, when we can and must do that, and quickly, too. For this, discipline and subordination must be enforced at all costs and with the utmost severity. The least condonement, the least slackness displayed here, in the rear, in any peaceful pursuit, will mean the loss of thousands of lives, and starvation in the rear.

Published in 1920
in the pamphlet *Speech by V. I. Lenin
at the Second All-Russia Conference
of Organisers Responsible for
Rural Work*

Collected Works, Vol. 31,
pp. 168-75

THE SECOND CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL⁹⁶

JULY 19-AUGUST 7, 1920

1

FROM THE REPORT ON THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION AND THE FUNDAMENTAL TASKS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

JULY 19

Imperialism's economic relations constitute the core of the entire international situation as it now exists. Throughout the twentieth century, this new, highest and final stage of capitalism has fully taken shape. Of course, you all know that the enormous dimensions that capital has reached are the most characteristic and essential feature of imperialism. The place of free competition has been taken by huge monopolies. An insignificant number of capitalists have, in some cases, been able to concentrate in their hands entire branches of industry; these have passed into the hands of combines, cartels, syndicates and trusts, not infrequently of an international nature. Thus, entire branches of industry, not only in single countries, but all over the world, have been taken over by monopolists in the field of finance, property rights, and partly of production. This has formed the basis for the unprecedented domination exercised by an insignificant number of very big banks, financial tycoons, financial magnates who have, in fact, transformed even the freest republics into financial monarchies. Before the war this was publicly recognised by such far from revolutionary writers as, for example, Lysis in France.

This domination by a handful of capitalists achieved full development when the whole world had been parti-

tioned, not only in the sense that the various sources of raw materials and means of production had been seized by the biggest capitalists, but also in the sense that the preliminary partition of the colonies had been completed. Some forty years ago, the population of the colonies stood at somewhat over 250,000,000, who were subordinated to six capitalist powers. Before the war of 1914, the population of the colonies was estimated at about 600,000,000, and if we add countries like Persia, Turkey, and China, which were already semi-colonies, we shall get, in round figures, a population of a thousand million people oppressed through colonial dependence by the richest, most civilised and freest countries. And you know that, apart from direct political and juridical dependence, colonial dependence presumes a number of relations of financial and economic dependence, a number of wars, which were not regarded as wars because very often they amounted to sheer massacres, when European and American imperialist troops, armed with the most up-to-date weapons of destruction, slaughtered the unarmed and defenceless inhabitants of colonial countries.

The first imperialist war of 1914-18 was the inevitable outcome of this partition of the whole world, of this domination by the capitalist monopolies, of this great power wielded by an insignificant number of very big banks—two, three, four or five in each country. This war was waged for the repartitioning of the whole world. It was waged in order to decide which of the small groups of the biggest states—the British or the German—was to obtain the opportunity and the right to rob, strangle and exploit the whole world. You know that the war settled this question in favour of the British group. And, as a result of this war, all capitalist contradictions have become immeasurably more acute. At a single stroke the war relegated about 250,000,000 of the world's inhabitants to what is equivalent to colonial status, viz., Russia, whose population can be taken at about 130,000,000, and Austria-Hungary, Germany and Bulgaria, with a total population of not less than 120,000,000. That means 250,000,000 people living in countries, of which some, like Germany, are among the most advanced, most enlightened, most cultured, and on a

level with modern technical progress. By means of the Treaty of Versailles, the war imposed such terms upon these countries that advanced peoples have been reduced to a state of colonial dependence, poverty, starvation, ruin, and loss of rights: this treaty binds them for many generations, placing them in conditions that no civilised nation has ever lived in. The following is the post-war picture of the world: at least 1,250 million people are at once brought under the colonial yoke, exploited by brutal capitalism, which once boasted of its love for peace, and had some right to do so some fifty years ago, when the world was not yet partitioned, the monopolies did not as yet rule, and capitalism could still develop in a relatively peaceful way, without tremendous military conflicts.

Today, after this "peaceful" period, we see a monstrous intensification of oppression, the reversion to a colonial and military oppression that is far worse than before. The Treaty of Versailles has placed Germany and the other defeated countries in a position that makes their economic existence physically impossible, deprives them of all rights, and humiliates them.

How many nations are the beneficiaries? To answer this question we must recall that the population of the United States—the only full beneficiary from the war, a country which, from a heavy debtor, has become a general creditor—is no more than 100,000,000. The population of Japan—which gained a great deal by keeping out of the European-American conflict and by seizing the enormous Asian continent—is 50,000,000. The population of Britain, which next to the above-mentioned countries gained most, is about 50,000,000. If we add the neutral countries with their very small populations, countries which were enriched by the war, we shall get, in round figures, some 250,000,000 people.

Thus you get the broad outlines of the picture of the world as it appeared after the imperialist war. In the oppressed colonies—countries which are being dismembered, such as Persia, Turkey and China, and in countries that were defeated and have been relegated to the position of colonies—there are 1,250 million inhabitants. Not more than 250,000,000 inhabit countries that have retained their

old positions, but have become economically dependent upon America, and all of which, during the war, were militarily dependent, once the war involved the whole world and did not permit a single state to remain really neutral. And, finally, we have not more than 250,000,000 inhabitants in countries whose top stratum, the capitalists alone, benefited from the partition of the world. We thus get a total of about 1,750 million comprising the entire population of the world. I would like to remind you of this picture of the world, for all the basic contradictions of capitalism, of imperialism, which are leading up to revolution, all the basic contradictions in the working-class movement that have led up to the furious struggle against the Second International, facts our chairman has referred to, are all connected with this partitioning of the world's population.

Of course, these figures give the economic picture of the world only approximately, in broad outline. And, comrades, it is natural that, with the population of the world divided in this way, exploitation by finance capital, the capitalist monopolies, has increased many times over.

Not only have the colonial and the defeated countries been reduced to a state of dependence; within each victor state the contradictions have grown more acute; all the capitalist contradictions have become aggravated. I shall illustrate this briefly with a few examples.

Let us take the national debts. We know that the debts of the principal European states increased no less than *sevenfold* in the period between 1914 and 1920. I shall quote another economic source, one of particular significance—Keynes, the British diplomat and author of *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, who, on instructions from his government, took part in the Versailles peace negotiations, observed them on the spot from the purely bourgeois point of view, studied the subject in detail, step by step, and took part in the conferences as an economist. He has arrived at conclusions which are more weighty, more striking and more instructive than any a Communist revolutionary could draw, because they are the conclusions of a well-known bourgeois and implacable enemy of Bolshevism, which he, like the British philistine

he is, imagines as something monstrous, ferocious, and bestial. Keynes has reached the conclusion that after the Peace of Versailles, Europe and the whole world are heading for bankruptcy. He has resigned, and thrown his book in the government's face with the words: "What you are doing is madness." I shall quote his figures, which can be summed up as follows.

What are the debtor-creditor relations that have developed between the principal powers? I shall convert pounds sterling into gold rubles, at a rate of ten gold rubles to one pound. Here is what we get: the United States has assets amounting to 19,000 million, its liabilities are nil. Before the war it was in Britain's debt. In his report on April 14, 1920, to the last congress of the Communist Party of Germany, Comrade Levi very correctly pointed out that there are now only two powers in the world that can act independently, viz., Britain and America. America alone is absolutely independent financially. Before the war she was a debtor; she is now a creditor only. All the other powers in the world are debtors. Britain has been reduced to a position in which her assets total 17,000 million, and her liabilities 8,000 million. She is already half-way to becoming a debtor nation. Moreover, her assets include about 6,000 million owed to her by Russia. Included in the debt are military supplies received by Russia during the war. When Krasin, as representative of the Russian Soviet Government, recently had occasion to discuss with Lloyd George the subject of debt agreements, he made it plain to the scientists and politicians, to the British Government's leaders, that they were labouring under a strange delusion if they were counting on getting these debts repaid. The British diplomat Keynes has already laid this delusion bare.

Of course, it is not only or even not at all a question of the Russian revolutionary government having no wish to pay the debts. No government would pay, because these debts are usurious interest on a sum that has been paid twenty times over, and the selfsame bourgeois Keynes, who does not in the least sympathise with the Russian revolutionary movement, says: "It is clear that these debts cannot be taken into account."

In regard to France, Keynes quotes the following figures: her assets amount to 3,500 million, and her liabilities to 10,500 million! And this is a country which the French themselves called the world's money-lender, because her "savings" were enormous; the proceeds of colonial and financial pillage—a gigantic capital—enabled her to grant thousands upon thousands of millions in loans, particularly to Russia. These loans brought in an enormous revenue. Notwithstanding this and notwithstanding victory, France has been reduced to debtor status.

A bourgeois American source, quoted by Comrade Braun, a Communist, in his book *Who Must Pay the War Debts?* (Leipzig, 1920), estimates the ratio of debts to national wealth as follows: in the victor countries, Britain and France, the ratio of debts to aggregate national wealth is over 50 per cent; in Italy the percentage is between 60 and 70, and in Russia 90. As you know, however, these debts do not disturb us, because we followed Keynes's excellent advice just a little before his book appeared—we annulled all our debts. (*Stormy applause.*)

In this, however, Keynes reveals the usual crankiness of the philistine: while advising that all debts should be annulled, he goes on to say that, of course, France only stands to gain by it, that, of course, Britain will not lose very much, as nothing can be got out of Russia in any case; America will lose a fair amount, but Keynes counts on American "generosity"! On this point our views differ from those of Keynes and other petty-bourgeois pacifists. We think that to get the debts annulled they will have to wait for something else to happen, and will have to try working in a direction other than counting on the "generosity" of the capitalists.

These few figures go to show that the imperialist war has created an impossible situation for the victor powers as well. This is further shown by the enormous disparity between wages and price rises. On March 8 of this year, the Supreme Economic Council, an institution charged with protecting the bourgeois system throughout the world from the mounting revolution, adopted a resolution which ended with an appeal for order, industry and thrift, provided, of course, the workers remain the slaves of capital.

This Supreme Economic Council, organ of the Entente and of the capitalists of the whole world, presented the following summary.

In the United States of America food prices have risen, on the average, by 120 per cent, whereas wages have increased only by 100 per cent. In Britain, food prices have gone up by 170 per cent, and wages 130 per cent; in France, food prices—300 per cent, and wages 200 per cent; in Japan—food prices 130 per cent, and wages 60 per cent (I have analysed Comrade Braun's figures in his pamphlet and those of the Supreme Economic Council as published in *The Times* of March 10, 1920).

In such circumstances, the workers' mounting resentment, the growth of a revolutionary temper and ideas, and the increase in spontaneous mass strikes are obviously inevitable, since the position of the workers is becoming intolerable. The workers' own experience is convincing them that the capitalists have become prodigiously enriched by the war and are placing the burden of war costs and debts upon the workers' shoulders. We recently learnt by cable that America wants to deport another 500 Communists to Russia so as to get rid of "dangerous agitators".

Even if America deports to our country, not 500 but 500,000 Russian, American, Japanese and French "agitators", that will make no difference, because there will still be the disparity between prices and wages, which they can do nothing about. The reason why they can do nothing about it is because private property is most strictly safeguarded, is "sacred" there. That should not be forgotten, because it is only in Russia that the exploiters' private property has been abolished. The capitalists can do nothing about the gap between prices and wages, and the workers cannot live on their previous wages. The old methods are useless against this calamity. Nothing can be achieved by isolated strikes, the parliamentary struggle, or the vote, because "private property is sacred", and the capitalists have accumulated such debts that the whole world is in bondage to a handful of men. Meanwhile the workers' living conditions are becoming more and more unbearable. There is no other way out but to abolish the exploiters' "private property".

In his pamphlet *Britain and the World Revolution*, valuable extracts from which were published by our *Bulletin of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs* of February 1920, Comrade Lapinsky points out that in Britain coal export prices have doubled as against those anticipated by official industrial circles.

In Lancashire things have gone so far that shares are at a premium of 400 per cent. Bank profits are at least 40-50 per cent. It should, moreover, be noted that, in determining bank profits, all bank officials are able to conceal the lion's share of profits by calling them, not profits but bonuses, commissions, etc. So here, too, indisputable economic facts prove that the wealth of a tiny handful of people has grown prodigiously and that their luxury beggars description, while the poverty of the working class is steadily growing. We must particularly note the further circumstance brought out very clearly by Comrade Levi in the report I have just referred to, namely, the change in the value of money. Money has everywhere depreciated as a result of the debts, the issue of paper currency, etc. The same bourgeois source I have already mentioned, namely, the statement of the Supreme Economic Council of March 8, 1920, has calculated that in Britain the depreciation in the value of currency as against the dollar is approximately one-third, in France and Italy two-thirds, and in Germany as much as 96 per cent.

This fact shows that the "mechanism" of the world capitalist economy is falling apart. The trade relations on which the acquisition of raw materials and the sale of commodities hinge under capitalism cannot go on; they cannot continue to be based on the subordination of a number of countries to a single country—the reason being the change in the value of money. No wealthy country can exist or trade unless it sells its goods and obtains raw materials.

Thus we have a situation in which America, a wealthy country that all countries are subordinate to, cannot buy or sell. And the selfsame Keynes who went through the entire gamut of the Versailles negotiations has been compelled to acknowledge this impossibility despite his unyielding determination to defend capitalism, and all his hatred

of Bolshevism. Incidentally, I do not think any communist manifesto, or one that is revolutionary in general, could compare in forcefulness with those pages in Keynes's book which depict Wilson and "Wilsonism" in action. Wilson was the idol of philistines and pacifists like Keynes and a number of heroes of the Second International (and even of the "Two-and-a-Half" International⁹⁷), who exalted the "Fourteen Points"⁹⁸ and even wrote "learned" books about the "roots" of Wilson's policy; they hoped that Wilson would save "social peace", reconcile exploiters and exploited, and bring about social reforms. Keynes showed vividly how Wilson was made a fool of, and all these illusions were shattered at the first impact with the practical, mercantile and huckster policy of capital as personified by Clemenceau and Lloyd George. The masses of the workers now see more clearly than ever, from their own experience—and the learned pedants could see it just by reading Keynes's book—that the "roots" of Wilson's policy lay in sanctimonious piffle, petty-bourgeois phrase-mongering, and an utter inability to understand the class struggle.

In consequence of all this, two conditions, two fundamental situations, have inevitably and naturally emerged. On the one hand, the impoverishment of the masses has grown incredibly, primarily among 1,250 million people, i.e., 70 per cent of the world's population. These are the colonial and dependent countries whose inhabitants possess no legal rights, countries "mandated" to the brigands of finance. Besides, the enslavement of the defeated countries has been sanctioned by the Treaty of Versailles and by existing secret treaties regarding Russia, whose validity, it is true, is sometimes about as real as that of the scraps of paper stating that we owe so many thousands of millions. For the first time in world history, we see robbery, slavery, dependence, poverty and starvation imposed upon 1,250 million people by a legal act.

On the other hand, the workers in each of the creditor countries have found themselves in conditions that are intolerable. The war has led to an unprecedented aggravation of all capitalist contradictions, this being the origin of the intense revolutionary ferment that is ever growing. During the war people were put under military discipline,

hurled into the ranks of death, or threatened with immediate wartime punishment. Because of the war conditions people could not see the economic realities. Writers, poets, the clergy, the whole press were engaged in nothing but glorifying the war. Now that the war has ended, the exposures have begun: German imperialism with its Peace of Brest-Litovsk has been laid bare; the Treaty of Versailles, which was to have been a victory for imperialism but proved its defeat, has been exposed. Incidentally, the example of Keynes shows that in Europe and America tens and hundreds of thousands of petty-bourgeois, intellectuals, and simply more or less literate and educated people, have had to follow the road taken by Keynes, who resigned and threw in the face of his government a book exposing it. Keynes has shown what is taking place and will take place in the minds of thousands and hundreds of thousands of people when they realise that all the speeches about a "war for liberty", etc., were sheer deception, and that as a result only a handful of people were enriched, while the others were ruined and reduced to slavery. Is it not a fact that the bourgeois Keynes declares that, to survive and save the British economy, the British must secure the resumption of free commercial intercourse between Germany and Russia? How can this be achieved? By cancelling all debts, as Keynes proposes. This is an idea that has been arrived at not only by Keynes, the learned economist; millions of people are or will be getting the same idea. And millions of people hear bourgeois economists declare that there is no way out except annulling the debts; therefore "damn the Bolsheviks" (who have annulled the debts), and let us appeal to America's "generosity"! I think that, on behalf of the Congress of the Communist International, we should send a message of thanks to these economists, who have been agitating for Bolshevism.

If, on the one hand, the economic position of the masses has become intolerable, and, on the other hand, the disintegration described by Keynes has set in and is growing among the negligible minority of all-powerful victor countries, then we are in the presence of the maturing of the two conditions for the world revolution.

We now have before us a somewhat more complete picture of the whole world. We know what dependence upon a handful of rich men means to 1,250 million people who have been placed in intolerable conditions of existence. On the other hand, when the peoples were presented with the League of Nations Covenant, declaring that the League had put an end to war and would henceforth not permit anyone to break the peace, and when this Covenant, the last hope of working people all over the world, came into force, it proved to be a victory of the first order for us. Before it came into force, people used to say that it was impossible not to impose special conditions on a country like Germany, but when the Covenant was drawn up, everything would come out all right. Yet, when the Covenant was published, the bitterest opponents of Bolshevism were obliged to repudiate it! When the Covenant came into operation, it appeared that a small group of the richest countries, the "Big Four"—in the persons of Clemenceau, Lloyd George, Orlando and Wilson—had been put on the job of creating the new relations! When the machinery of the Covenant was put into operation, this led to a complete breakdown.

We saw this in the case of the wars against Russia. Weak, ruined and crushed, Russia, a most backward country, fought against all the nations, against a league of the rich and powerful states that dominate the world, and emerged victorious. We could not put up a force that was anything like the equal of theirs, and yet we proved the victors. Why was that? Because there was not a jot of unity among them, because each power worked against the other. France wanted Russia to pay her debts and become a formidable force against Germany; Britain wanted to partition Russia, and attempted to seize the Baku oil-fields and conclude a treaty with the border states of Russia. Among the official British documents there is a Paper which scrupulously enumerates all the states (fourteen in all) which some six months ago, in December 1919, pledged themselves to take Moscow and Petrograd. Britain based her policy on these states, to whom she granted loans running into millions. All these calculations have now misfired, and all the loans are unrecoverable.

Such is the situation created by the League of Nations. Every day of this Covenant's existence provides the best propaganda for Bolshevism, since the most powerful adherents of the capitalist "order" are revealing that, on every question, they put spokes in one another's wheels. Furious wrangling over the partitioning of Turkey, Persia, Mesopotamia and China is going on between Japan, Britain, America and France. The bourgeois press in these countries is full of the bitterest attacks and the angriest statements against their "colleagues" for trying to snatch the booty from under their noses. We see complete discord at the top, among this handful, this very small number of extremely rich countries. There are 1,250 million people who find it impossible to live in the conditions of servitude which "advanced" and civilised capitalism wishes to impose on them: after all, these represent 70 per cent of the world's population. This handful of the richest states—Britain, America and Japan (though Japan was able to plunder the Eastern, the Asian countries, she cannot constitute an independent financial and military force without support from another country)—these two or three countries are unable to organise economic relations, and are directing their policies toward disrupting policies of their colleagues and partners in the League of Nations. Hence the world crisis; it is these economic roots of the crisis that provide the chief reason of the brilliant successes the Communist International is achieving.

2

**REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON THE NATIONAL
AND THE COLONIAL QUESTIONS**
JULY 26⁹⁹

Comrades, I shall confine myself to a brief introduction, after which Comrade Maring, who has been secretary to our commission, will give you a detailed account of the changes we have made in the theses. He will be followed by Comrade Roy, who has formulated the supplementary theses. Our commission have unanimously adopted both the preliminary theses, as amended, and the supplementary theses. We have thus reached complete unanimity on all major issues. I shall now make a few brief remarks.

First, what is the cardinal idea underlying our theses? It is the distinction between oppressed and oppressor nations. Unlike the Second International and bourgeois democracy, we emphasise this distinction. In this age of imperialism, it is particularly important for the proletariat and the Communist International to establish the concrete economic facts and to proceed from concrete realities, not from abstract postulates, in all colonial and national problems.

The characteristic feature of imperialism consists in the whole world, as we now see, being divided into a large number of oppressed nations and an insignificant number of oppressor nations, the latter possessing colossal wealth and powerful armed forces. The vast majority of the world's population, over a thousand million, perhaps even 1,250 million people, if we take the total population of the world as 1,750 million, in other words, about 70 per

cent of the world's population, belong to the oppressed nations, which are either in a state of direct colonial dependence or are semi-colonies, as, for example, Persia, Turkey and China, or else, conquered by some big imperialist power, have become greatly dependent on that power by virtue of peace treaties. This idea of distinction, of dividing the nations into oppressor and oppressed, runs through the theses, not only the first theses published earlier over my signature, but also those submitted by Comrade Roy. The latter were framed chiefly from the standpoint of the situation in India and other big Asian countries oppressed by Britain. Herein lies their great importance to us.

The second basic idea in our theses is that, in the present world situation following the imperialist war, relations between peoples and the world political system as a whole are determined by the struggle waged by a small group of imperialist nations against the Soviet movement and the Soviet states headed by Soviet Russia. Unless we bear that in mind, we shall not be able to pose a single national or colonial problem correctly, even if it concerns a most outlying part of the world. The Communist parties, in civilised and backward countries alike, can pose and solve political problems correctly only if they make this postulate their starting-point.

Third, I should like especially to emphasise the question of the bourgeois-democratic movement in backward countries. This is a question that has given rise to certain differences. We have discussed whether it would be right or wrong, in principle and in theory, to state that the Communist International and the Communist parties must support the bourgeois-democratic movement in backward countries. As a result of our discussion, we have arrived at the unanimous decision to speak of the national-revolutionary movement rather than of the "bourgeois-democratic" movement. It is beyond doubt that any national movement can only be a bourgeois-democratic movement, since the overwhelming mass of the population in the backward countries consist of peasants who represent bourgeois-capitalist relationships. It would be utopian to believe that proletarian parties in these backward countries, if

indeed they can emerge in them, can pursue communist tactics and a communist policy, without establishing definite relations with the peasant movement and without giving it effective support. However, the objections have been raised that, if we speak of the bourgeois-democratic movement, we shall be obliterating all distinctions between the reformist and the revolutionary movement. Yet that distinction has been very clearly revealed of late in the backward and colonial countries, since the imperialist bourgeoisie is doing everything in its power to implant a reformist movement among the oppressed nations too. There has been a certain *rapprochement* between the bourgeoisie of the exploiting countries and that of the colonies, so that very often—perhaps even in most cases—the bourgeoisie of the oppressed countries, while it does support the national movement, is in full accord with the imperialist bourgeoisie, i.e., joins forces with it against all revolutionary movements and revolutionary classes. This was irrefutably proved in the commission, and we decided that the only correct attitude was to take this distinction into account and, in nearly all cases, substitute the term “national-revolutionary” for the term “bourgeois-democratic”. The significance of this change is that we, as Communists, should and will support bourgeois-liberation movements in the colonies only when they are genuinely revolutionary, and when their exponents do not hinder our work of educating and organising in a revolutionary spirit the peasantry and the masses of the exploited. If these conditions do not exist, the Communists in these countries must combat the reformist bourgeoisie, to whom the heroes of the Second International also belong. Reformist parties already exist in the colonial countries, and in some cases their spokesmen call themselves Social-Democrats and socialists. The distinction I have referred to has been made in all the theses with the result, I think, that our view is now formulated much more precisely.

Next, I would like to make a remark on the subject of peasants' Soviets. The Russian Communists' practical activities in the former tsarist colonies, in such backward countries as Turkestan, etc., have confronted us with the question of how to apply the communist tactics and policy

in pre-capitalist conditions. The preponderance of pre-capitalist relationships is still the main determining feature in these countries, so that there can be no question of a purely proletarian movement in them. There is practically no industrial proletariat in these countries. Nevertheless, we have assumed, we must assume, the role of leader even there. Experience has shown us that tremendous difficulties have to be surmounted in these countries. However, the practical results of our work have also shown that despite these difficulties we are in a position to inspire in the masses an urge for independent political thinking and independent political action, even where a proletariat is practically non-existent. This work has been more difficult for us than it will be for comrades in the West-European countries, because in Russia the proletariat is engrossed in the work of state administration. It will readily be understood that peasants living in conditions of semi-feudal dependence can easily assimilate and give effect to the idea of Soviet organisation. It is also clear that the oppressed masses, those who are exploited, not only by merchant capital but also by the feudalists, and by a state based on feudalism, can apply this weapon, this type of organisation, in their conditions too. The idea of Soviet organisation is a simple one, and is applicable, not only to proletarian but also to peasant feudal and semi-feudal relations. Our experience in this respect is not as yet very considerable. However, the debate in the commission, in which several representatives from colonial countries participated, demonstrated convincingly that the Communist International's theses should point out that peasants' Soviets, Soviets of the exploited, are a weapon which can be employed, not only in capitalist countries but also in countries with pre-capitalist relations, and that it is the absolute duty of Communist parties and of elements prepared to form Communist parties, everywhere to conduct propaganda in favour of peasants' Soviets or of working people's Soviets, this to include backward and colonial countries. Wherever conditions permit, they should at once make attempts to set up Soviets of the working people.

This opens up a very interesting and very important field for our practical work. So far our joint experience

in this respect has not been extensive, but more and more data will gradually accumulate. It is unquestionable that the proletariat of the advanced countries can and should give help to the working masses of the backward countries, and that the backward countries can emerge from their present stage of development when the victorious proletariat of the Soviet Republics extends a helping hand to these masses and is in a position to give them support.

There was quite a lively debate on this question in the commission, not only in connection with the theses I signed, but still more in connection with Comrade Roy's theses, which he will defend here, and certain amendments to which were unanimously adopted.

The question was posed as follows: are we to consider as correct the assertion that the capitalist stage of economic development is inevitable for backward nations now on the road to emancipation and among whom a certain advance towards progress is to be seen since the war? We replied in the negative. If the victorious revolutionary proletariat conducts systematic propaganda among them, and the Soviet governments come to their aid with all the means at their disposal—in that event it will be mistaken to assume that the backward peoples must inevitably go through the capitalist stage of development. Not only should we create independent contingents of fighters and party organisations in the colonies and the backward countries, not only at once launch propaganda for the organisation of peasants' Soviets and strive to adapt them to the pre-capitalist conditions, but the Communist International should advance the proposition, with the appropriate theoretical grounding, that with the aid of the proletariat of the advanced countries, backward countries can go over to the Soviet system and, through certain stages of development, to communism, without having to pass through the capitalist stage.

The necessary means for this cannot be indicated in advance. These will be prompted by practical experience. It has, however, been definitely established that the idea of the Soviets is understood by the mass of the working people in even the most remote nations, that the Soviets should be adapted to the conditions of a pre-capitalist so-

cial system, and that the Communist parties should immediately begin work in this direction in all parts of the world.

I would also like to emphasise the importance of revolutionary work by the Communist parties, not only in their own, but also in the colonial countries, and particularly among the troops employed by the exploiting nations to keep the colonial peoples in subjection.

Comrade Quelch of the British Socialist Party¹⁰⁰ spoke of this in our commission. He said that the rank-and-file British worker would consider it treasonable to help the enslaved nations in their uprisings against British rule. True, the jingoist and chauvinist-minded labour aristocrats of Britain and America present a very great danger to socialism, and are a bulwark of the Second International. Here we are confronted with the greatest treachery on the part of leaders and workers belonging to this bourgeois International. The colonial question has been discussed in the Second International as well. The Basle Manifesto¹⁰¹ is quite clear on this point, too. The parties of the Second International have pledged themselves to revolutionary action, but they have given no sign of genuine revolutionary work or of assistance to the exploited and dependent nations in their revolt against the oppressor nations. This, I think, applies also to most of the parties that have withdrawn from the Second International and wish to join the Third International. We must proclaim this publicly for all to hear, and it is irrefutable. We shall see if any attempt is made to deny it.

All these considerations have formed the basis of our resolutions, which undoubtedly are too lengthy but will nevertheless, I am sure, prove of use and will promote the development and organisation of genuine revolutionary work in connection with the national and the colonial questions. And that is our principal task.

Food

TO G. V. CHICHERIN¹⁰²

July 22, 1920

To Comrade Chicherin

My proposal:

1) Directives to be given to Kopp through the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs in the spirit of Comrade Chicherin's proposal (only trade negotiations).

2) Gukovsky to be answered.

3) Curzon to be replied to *in two days* (not earlier; why spoil them?), after asking Kamenev and the Consul once again: why haven't we received the original in English?

The reply to be extra polite on the following lines:

if *Britain* (+ France +? +?) wants a general, i.e., a *real* peace, *we* have long been *for it*. In that case *remove Wrangel*, since he is *your man*, kept by you, and then we begin negotiations at once.

If Poland wants peace, we are *for*; we've said it clearly and we repeat it, let her make an offer.

If you interrupt *trade* negotiations, we are very sorry, but you expose *yourselves* as departing from the truth, because you began these negotiations *during* Poland's war and *promised an armistice*. Calmly and precisely expose their contradictions.

The draft reply to be approved by telephone through the members of the Political Bureau on Friday or Saturday, July 23 or 24.

Lenin

Comrade Chicherin,

If you agree, inform Comrade Krestinsky (he agrees in principle), then draft the reply.

Yours,
Lenin

Published for the first time
in the Fourth (Russian) Edition
of the *Collected Works*

Collected Works, Vol. 35,
pp. 452-53

NINTH ALL-RUSSIA CONFERENCE OF THE R.C.P.(B.). SEPTEMBER 22-25, 1920

POLITICAL REPORT OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE RUSSIAN COMMUNIST PARTY (BOLSHEVIKS)¹⁰³ SEPTEMBER 22, 1920 Newspaper Report

The war against Poland, or, to be more precise, the July-August campaign, has radically changed the international political situation.

The Poles' attack against us was preceded by an episode typical of the international relations existing at the time. When, in January, we offered Poland peace terms that were most favourable to her and most unfavourable to us, the diplomatists of all lands interpreted the fact in their own way: since the Bolsheviks were making such tremendous concessions, that should be taken to mean that they were very weak. This was merely more confirmation of bourgeois diplomacy's inability to understand the methods employed by our new diplomacy, that of direct and frank declarations. That was why our proposals evoked merely an outburst of savage chauvinism in Poland, France and other countries, and prompted Poland to attack us. At first the Poles captured Kiev, but our forces' counter-attack then brought them right up to Warsaw. Then came a turn in the events, and we fell back for over a hundred versts.

The undoubtedly difficult situation that resulted has not been a total loss to us. We have completely upset the diplomatists' expectations to make use of our weakness and have proved that Poland cannot defeat us, whereas we have never been and are not far from victory over Poland. At present we still hold a hundred versts of captured

territory. Finally, our advance on Warsaw has had such a powerful effect on Western Europe and on the entire world situation that it has profoundly changed the alignment of the struggling internal and external political forces.

Our army's close approach to Warsaw has uncontestedly shown that the centre of world imperialism's entire system, which rests on the Treaty of Versailles, lies somewhere very close to the Polish capital. Poland, the last anti-Bolshevik stronghold fully controlled by the Entente, is such an important element in that system that when the Red Army threatened that stronghold the entire structure was shaken. The Soviet Republic has become a major factor in world politics.

The new situation which has arisen has, in the first place, revealed the tremendously significant fact that the bourgeoisie of the Entente-oppressed countries is in the main for us, and these countries contain seventy per cent of the world's population. We have already seen that the small states, which have had such a bad time under Entente tutelage (Estonia, Georgia, etc.), and have been hanging their Bolsheviks, have made peace with us, against the will of the Entente. This has been manifesting itself with special force throughout the world. All Germany began to seethe when our forces approached Warsaw. In that country a situation arose very much like that which could be seen in Russia in 1905, when the Black Hundreds aroused and involved in political life large and most backward sections of the peasantry, which were opposed to the Bolsheviks one day, and on the next were demanding all the land from the landed proprietors. In Germany too we have seen a similar unnatural bloc between the Black Hundreds and the Bolsheviks. There has appeared a strange type of Black-Hundred revolutionary, like the backward rustic youth from East Prussia who, as I read in a German non-Bolshevik newspaper the other day, says that the Kaiser will have to return because there is no order, but one has to follow the Bolsheviks.

Our presence at the walls of Warsaw has had, as another consequence, a powerful effect on the revolutionary movement in Europe, particularly in Britain. Though we have not been able to effect the industrial proletariat

of Poland beyond the Vistula and in Warsaw (this being one of the main reasons for our defeat), we have succeeded in influencing the British proletariat and in raising the movement there to an unprecedented level, to an absolutely new stage in the revolution. When the British Government presented an ultimatum to us, it transpired that it would first have to consult the British workers. The latter, nine-tenths of whose leaders are out-and-out Mensheviks, replied to the ultimatum by forming a Council of Action.¹⁰⁴

Alarmed by these developments, the British press raised a hullabaloo about what it called this "duality of government". It had every reason to say so. Britain found herself at the same stage of political relationships as Russia after February 1917, when the Soviets were obliged to scrutinise every step taken by the bourgeois government. This Council of Action unites all workers, irrespective of party, just like our All-Russia Central Executive Committee of the period when Gotz, Dan and others were running things, a kind of association which runs parallel with the government, and in which the Mensheviks are forced to act in a semi-Bolshevik way. Just as our Mensheviks finally got confounded and helped win over the masses to our side, the Mensheviks in the Council of Action have been forced by the inexorable course of events to clear the way to the Bolshevik revolution for the worker masses of Britain. According to testimony by competent persons, the British Mensheviks already consider themselves a government, and are prepared to replace the bourgeois government in the near future. This will be the next step in the general process of the British proletarian revolution.

These tremendous changes in the British working-class movements are exerting a powerful influence on the world working-class movement, and first and foremost on the working-class movement in France.

Such are the results of our recent Polish campaign in its effect on world politics and the relations emerging in Western Europe.

We are now faced with the question of war and peace with Poland.¹⁰⁵ We want to avoid a winter campaign that will be hard on us, and are again offering Poland a peace that is to her advantage and our disadvantage. However,

the bourgeois diplomats, following their old habit, may possibly interpret our frank statement as a sign of weakness. They have probably decided on a winter campaign. At this stage we have to ascertain the conditions in which we shall probably have to enter a new period of the war.

In Western Europe our defeat has brought about certain changes and rallied against us heterogeneous elements that are hostile to us. However, we have on more than one occasion seen even more powerful groups and currents hostile to us, which nevertheless could not achieve anything.

We have against us a bloc consisting of Poland, France and Wrangel. France pins her hopes on the latter. However, this bloc suffers from the same old malady—the antagonism among its elements, and the fear felt by the Polish petty bourgeoisie with regard to Black-Hundred Russia and to Wrangel, its typical representative. Petty-bourgeois and patriotic Poland, the Polish Socialist Party, the Ludowa Party,¹⁰⁶ i.e., the well-to-do peasants—all of these want peace. Here is what spokesmen of these parties said to us in Minsk, "We know that it was not the Entente that saved Warsaw and Poland; it was unable to save us. It was the upsurge of patriotism that saved us." Such lessons are not to be forgotten. The Poles realise very clearly that this war will ruin them financially. War has to be paid for, and France upholds the "sanctity of private property". The representatives of the petty-bourgeois parties are aware that Poland was on the eve of a crisis even before the war, and that a war will mean further ruination; that is why they prefer peace. We want to make use of this by offering peace to Poland.

Another factor of the utmost importance has appeared—the change in the social composition of the Polish army. We defeated Kolchak and Denikin only after the social composition of their armies had changed, when their basic cadres were watered down in the mass of mobilised peasants. The same kind of process is under way in the Polish army; the government has been obliged to call up workers and peasants of the older age groups, who have gone through the even harsher imperialist war. This army is now made up, not of youngsters, who can easily be

"brain-washed", but of older men, who will not let themselves be talked over. Poland has passed the point which at first assured her total victory, and then total defeat.

If we have to wage a winter campaign, we shall win despite exhaustion and fatigue. There can be no doubt on that score. Our economic situation also vouches for that outcome. It has improved considerably. Compared with last year, we have acquired a firm economic basis. In 1917-18 we gathered in 30 million poods of grain, in 1918-19—110 million poods, and in 1919-20—260 million; next year we expect to collect 400 million poods. These are far higher figures than those of the time when we struggled desperately to make both ends meet. No longer shall we look with such horror upon the multi-coloured banknotes that run into the thousands of millions, and today clearly show us that they are the wreckage, the tatters, of the old bourgeois vestments.

We now have over a hundred million poods of oil. The Donets Basin now provides us with between twenty and thirty million poods of coal a month. The firewood situation has greatly improved. As recently as last year we had only firewood—no oil or coal.

All this gives us the right to say that, if we close our ranks and bend every effort, we shall win the victory.

Pravda No. 216,
September 29, 1920

Collected Works, Vol. 31,
pp. 275-79

FROM THE SPEECH
DELIVERED AT A CONFERENCE OF CHAIARMEN
OF UYEZD, VOLOST AND VILLAGE EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEES OF MOSCOW GUBERNIA
OCTOBER 15, 1920

Comrades, in my report on the domestic and the external position of the Republic, which you wished to hear, I shall naturally have to devote most of my remarks to the war with Poland and its causes. It was this war which in the main determined the Republic's domestic and external position during the past six months. Now that the preliminaries for a peace with Poland have just been signed, it is possible and necessary to take a general look at this war and its significance and try to give thought to the lessons we have all learnt from the war which has just ended, though nobody knows whether it has ended for good. I would therefore like first to remind you that it was on April 26 of this year that the Poles began their offensive. The Soviet Republic solemnly and formally proposed a peace to the Poles, the Polish landowners and the Polish bourgeoisie, on terms more favourable than those we have offered them now, despite the tremendous reverses our troops suffered at Warsaw, and the even greater reverses during the retreat from Warsaw. At the end of the April of this year, the Poles held a line between 50 and 150 versts to the east of the one they now regard as the line of a preliminary peace; though at that time the line was manifestly an unfair one, we solemnly proposed peace to them on behalf of the All-Russia Central Executive

Committee, since, as you all of course know and remember, the Soviet government was mainly concerned at the time with ensuring the transition to peaceful construction. We had no reason for wishing to resort to arms in settling questions in dispute between ourselves and the Polish state. We were fully aware that the Polish state was, and still is, a state of the landowners and capitalists, and that it is fully dependent on the capitalists of the Entente countries, in particular on France. Though at the time Poland controlled, not only the whole of Lithuania but also Byelorussia, to say nothing of Eastern Galicia, we considered it our duty to do everything possible to avert a war, so as to give the working class and the peasantry of Russia at least a brief respite from the imperialist and civil wars, and at last enable them to get down in earnest to peaceful work. The events that ensued have happened all too frequently: our straightforward and public offer of peace on the line the Poles actually held was taken as a sign of weakness. Bourgeois diplomats of all countries are unaccustomed to such frank statements, and our readiness to accept a peace along a line so disadvantageous to us was taken and interpreted as proof of our extreme weakness. The French capitalists succeeded in inciting the Polish capitalists to go to war. You will remember how, after a brief interval following upon the Polish offensive, we replied by dealing a counter-blow and almost reached Warsaw, after which our troops suffered a heavy defeat, and were thrown back.

For over a month and right down to the present, our troops were retreating and suffered reverses, for they were utterly worn out, exhausted by their unparalleled advance from Polotsk to Warsaw. But, I repeat, despite this difficult situation, peace was signed on terms less advantageous to Poland than the earlier ones. The earlier frontier lay 50 versts to the east, whereas it is now 50 versts to the west. Thus, though we signed a peace at a time favourable only to the enemy, when our troops were on the retreat and Wrangel was building up his offensive, we signed a peace treaty on more favourable terms. This once again proves to you that when the Soviet Government proposes peace, its words and statements have to be treated seriously; otherwise what will happen is that we shall

offer peace on terms less favourable to us, and get this peace on better terms. This is a lesson the Polish landowners and capitalists will not, of course, forget; they realise that they have gone too far; the peace terms now give them less territory than was offered previously. This is not the first lesson either. You all probably remember that, in the spring of 1919, a representative of the U.S. Government came to Moscow and proposed a preliminary peace with us and with all the whiteguard commanders at the time: Kolchak, Denikin and others, a peace which would have been extremely unfavourable to us. When he returned and reported on our peace terms, they were not considered advantageous, and the war went on. You are aware of the outcome of the war. This is not the first time that the Soviet state has proved that it is considerably stronger than it appears, and that our diplomatic Notes do not contain the boasts and threats that are usual with all bourgeois governments; consequently, rejecting an offer of peace from Soviet Russia means getting that peace some time later on terms that are far worse. Such things are not forgotten in international politics; after proving to the Polish landowners that they have now obtained a peace worse than the one which we originally offered, we shall teach the Polish people, the Polish peasants and workers, to weigh and compare the statements of their government and ours.

Many of you may have read in the newspapers the American Government's Note, in which it declares: "we do not wish to have any dealings with the Soviet Government because it does not honour its obligations." This does not surprise us, because it has been said for many years, the only outcome being that all their attempts to invade Soviet Russia have ended in disaster. The Polish newspapers, nearly all of which are in the pay of the landowners and the capitalists—there this is called freedom of the press—assert that the Soviet Government cannot be trusted, since it is a government of tyrants and frauds. All Polish newspapers say the same thing, but the Polish workers and peasants compare these words with the facts, and the facts show that we demonstrated our attachment to peace the very first time we made our peace offer; by concluding

peace in October we proved this again. You will not find proof of this kind in the history of any bourgeois government, a fact that cannot but leave its impress on the minds of the Polish workers and peasants. The Soviet Government signed a peace when it was not to its advantage to do so. It is only in this way that we shall teach the governments that are controlled by the landowners and capitalists to stop lying; only in this way shall we destroy the faith the workers and peasants have in them. We must give more thought to this than to anything else. Soviet power in Russia is surrounded by countless enemies, and yet these enemies are impotent. Think of the course and outcome of the Polish war. We now know that the French capitalists stood behind Poland, that they supplied Poland with money and munitions, and sent them French officers. We quite recently received information that African troops, namely French colonial troops, had appeared on the Polish front. This means that the war was waged by France with aid from Britain and America. At the same time, France recognised the lawful government of Russia in the person of Wrangel—so Wrangel too was backed by France, who provided him with the means to equip and maintain an army. Britain and America are also aiding Wrangel's army. Consequently, three allies stood against us: France, supported by the world's wealthy countries, Poland, and Wrangel—yet we have emerged from this war by concluding a favourable peace. In other words, we have won. Anyone who examines the map will see that we have won, that we have emerged from this war with more territory than we had before it started. But is the enemy weaker than we are? Is he weaker in the military sense? Has he got fewer men and munitions? No, he has more of everything. This enemy is stronger than we are, and yet he has been beaten. This is what we must give thought to in order to understand Soviet Russia's position with respect to all other countries.

When we Bolsheviks started the revolution, we said that it could and should be started, but at the same time we did not forget that it could be successfully ended and brought to an absolutely victorious conclusion, not confining ourselves to Russia alone, but in alliance with a number

of countries, after defeating international capital. Russian capital is linked up with international capital. When our enemies say to us: even if you were to win in Russia, your cause will nevertheless perish because the other capitalist states will crush you, we now have an answer—the highly important experience of the war with Poland, which shows how things have actually turned out. Indeed, why did it happen that, within six months and even less, if we take April as the beginning of the offensive, France, Poland and Wrangel, who were stronger than we are, were full of hatred of Bolshevism, and were determined to overthrow Soviet power, have been defeated, and the war has ended in our favour? How could it have happened that Soviet Russia, exhausted by the imperialist and civil wars, surrounded by enemies, and cut off from every source of supplies and equipment—that this Soviet Russia has proved the victor? We must reflect on this because, if we go deeper into this question, we begin to understand the mechanism, not only of the Russian but of the world revolution as well. We see confirmation of the fact that the Russian revolution is but a link in the chain of the world revolution, and that our cause is strong and invincible because the cause of revolution is developing throughout the world; economic conditions are evolving in a way that is making our enemies weaker and us stronger with every day. The Polish war has again proved that this is neither exaggeration, boasting nor over-enthusiasm. Three allies were fighting against us. One might have thought that uniting these three allies should present no difficulty but it appeared that, taught by the great experience of Yudenich, Kolchak and Denikin campaigns, they were unable to unite against us and squabbled at every step. In this connection, the history of the Polish war, which has only just ended, is particularly instructive. Our march on Warsaw—the Red Army's march, in which weary, exhausted and poorly-clad soldiers covered over 600 versts, inflicting one defeat after another on the Polish troops, who were excellently trained, with hundreds of the best French officer instructors—showed us the kind of relations that existed among our enemies. On July 12, when the Red Army troops were approaching the Polish fron-

tier, we received a telegram from Britain's Foreign Secretary, Curzon, on behalf of the League of Nations, that notorious League of Nations, an alliance which professes to unite Britain, France, America, Italy and Japan, countries with a tremendous military potential and possessing all the navies of the world, and against whom military resistance might seem perfectly impossible and absurd. On behalf of this League of Nations, Curzon proposed that we stop the war and enter into negotiations with the Poles in London. According to this telegram, the boundary should pass near Grodno, Byelostok, Brest-Litovsk and along the River San in Eastern Galicia. To this proposal we replied that we recognised no League of Nations, since we had seen its insignificance and the disregard that even its members had for its decisions. The French Government considered our reply insolent, and one would have thought that this League of Nations would come out against us. But what happened? The League of Nations fell apart at our very first declaration, and Britain and France fell on each other.

For several years Britain's Secretary for War Churchill has been employing every means, both lawful and more often unlawful from the viewpoint of British law, to help the whiteguards against Russia, so as to supply them with military equipment. He hates Soviet Russia bitterly, yet immediately after our declaration Britain fell out with France, because France needs the forces of a whiteguard Russia to protect her against Germany, while Britain needs no such protection. Britain, a naval power, fears no such action because she has a most powerful navy. Thus, the League of Nations, which has sent such unprecedented threats to Russia, was itself helpless from the very outset. At every step the interests of the League's member states are patently in conflict. France desires the defeat of Britain, and vice versa. When Comrade Kamenev was negotiating with the British Government in London and asked the British Prime Minister, "Let us suppose that you will really do what you say, what about France?", the British Prime Minister had to reply that France would go her own way. He said that Britain could not take the same road as France. It became plain that the League of

Nations was non-existent, that the alliance of the capitalist powers is sheer fraud, and that in actual fact it is an alliance of robbers, each trying to snatch something from the others. When at the conclusion of peace in Riga, we discovered what divided Poland, Britain, France and Wrangel, and why they could not act in unison, we learnt that their interests differed: Britain wanted to have the small succession states—Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania—in her sphere of influence and was not interested in the restoration of tsarist or whiteguard or even bourgeois Russia; she even stood to lose from it. That was why Britain was acting counter to France and could not unite with Poland and Wrangel. France's concern was to fight to the last Polish soldier for her interests and the debts owed to her. She hoped we would pay her the 20-thousand-million debt incurred by the former tsar and recognised by the Kerensky government. Any sensible person will realise that the French capitalists will never see the colour of their money; the French capitalists realise that the French workers and peasants cannot be made to fight, while Polish soldiers are plentiful and can be driven into battle—so let them die that the French capitalists may get their millions back. However, the Polish workers too can see that the French, British and other officers behave in Poland just as if they were in a conquered country. That was why, during the Riga negotiations, we saw that the party of the Polish workers and peasants which is undoubtedly patriotic and undoubtedly hostile to Bolshevism, just like our Right-wing Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, stood for peace and was opposed to the government of the Polish landowners and capitalists, who up to the last moment tried to wreck the peace treaty, and even now want to do so and will go on doing so for a long time to come. I shall have to speak on this point when I come to the question of whether the preliminary peace we have just concluded will last.

The third ally, Wrangel, who fought for the return of the whole of Russia to the landowners and the capitalists, regards Poland as part of Russia. All the Russian tsars, landowners and capitalists were accustomed to regarding

Poland as their prey; they never forgot that Poland had long ago been crushed by the Russian serf army led to war by the tsar. That meant that, had Wrangel been victorious, he would have used his victory in order to restore full power, both in Russia and in Poland, to the landowners. What happened, however, was that, when the three allies stood ready to attack us, they began by falling out among themselves. France's aims are alien to both the Polish peasant and the Polish worker, while Wrangel's aims are alien even to any Polish landowner. And now, when we hear Wrangel's radio or the French Government radio from Paris, we learn that France and Wrangel are gnashing their teeth because they realise the implication of this peace which we have concluded with Poland, though they assert that this is no peace, and that Poland cannot sign it. We shall see what we shall see, but meanwhile a peace has been signed. Actually, neither Wrangel nor France understands how it could have come about. They cannot stomach the miracle of a devastated Soviet Russia defeating civilised countries far stronger than she is. They do not understand that these victories stem from the fundamental doctrine of the Communists, which says that property divides whereas labour unites. Private property is robbery, and a state based on private property is a state of robbers, who are fighting for a share of the spoils. Though they have not yet finished this war, they are already fighting among themselves. A year ago fourteen states were threatening us, yet the alliance of these fourteen states at once fell apart. Why did it fall apart? Simply because the agreement between these states only existed on paper, and not one of them went to war. When a war started and France, Poland and Wrangel joined forces, their alliance too fell apart, because they were trying to trip one another up. As the Russian proverb says, they were trying to share out the skin of a bear they had not yet killed. They were, in fact, squabbling over a bear they would never kill.

The experience of world politics has shown that the alliance against Soviet Russia is irretrievably doomed to failure, because it is an imperialist alliance, an alliance of plunderers who are not united, and are bound by no

genuine or permanent interests. They lack that which unites the working class; they have no common interests, which was again revealed during the Polish war. When our Red Army crushed the resistance of the Poles, captured Byelostok and Brest-Litovsk and approached the Polish frontier, this signified the collapse of the entire established system of international politics, for it is based on the Treaty of Versailles, which is a treaty of robbers and plunderers. When the Peace of Brest-Litovsk was imposed on us, a burden we bore so long, there was a world-wide outcry that it was a robber's peace. After Germany's defeat, the League of Nations which had declared, during the war against Germany, that it was being fought for liberation and democracy, imposed a peace on the vanquished country, but it was a usurer's peace, an oppressor's peace, a butcher's peace, because Germany and Austria were looted and carved up. They deprived them of all means of subsistence, and left the children hungry and starving; this was a predatory peace, without any parallel. What then is the Treaty of Versailles? It is an unparalleled and predatory peace, which has made slaves of tens of millions of people, including the most civilised. This is no peace, but terms dictated to a defenceless victim by armed robbers. Through the Treaty of Versailles, Germany's enemies have deprived her of all her colonies. Turkey, Persia and China have been enslaved. A situation has arisen wherein seven-tenths of the world's population are in a condition of servitude. These slaves are to be found throughout the world and are at the mercy of a handful of countries—Britain, France and Japan. That is why this international system in its entirety, the order based on the Treaty of Versailles, stands on the brink of a volcano, for the enslaved seven-tenths of the world's population are waiting impatiently for someone to give them a lead in a struggle which will shake all these countries. France hopes that her loans will be repaid to her, but is herself in debt to America whom she cannot repay because she has not the wherewithal, and private property is sacred over there. What is the essence of this sacrosanct private property? It is that the tsars and capitalists borrow money, while the workers and the peasants have to repay the debt for them.

They are on the verge of bankruptcy. They cannot meet their debts. At that very moment, the Red Army broke through the Polish frontier and approached the German borders. At the time it was common talk in Germany, even among the reactionaries and the monarchists, that the Bolsheviks would save them, it being evident that the Versailles peace was falling apart, that there existed a Red Army which had declared war on all capitalists. What has come to pass? It has come to pass that the Peace of Versailles now hinges on Poland. True, we lacked the strength to bring the war to an end. It should, however, be remembered that our workers and peasants were ill-clad and practically barefooted, yet they marched on and overcame all difficulties, fighting in conditions never before experienced by any other army in the world. We lacked the strength to take Warsaw and finish off the Polish landowners, whiteguards and capitalists, but our army showed the whole world that the Treaty of Versailles is not the force it is made out to be, that hundreds of millions of people are condemned to repay loans for many years to come and have their grandchildren and great-grandchildren do the same in order that the French, British and other imperialists may be enriched. The Red Army proved that the Treaty of Versailles is not so very stable. After the Treaty of Versailles our army showed that in the summer of 1920, the Soviet land, devastated as it was, was on the eve of complete victory thanks to that Red Army. The world saw that a force exists to which the Treaty of Versailles holds no terror, and that no Versailles treaties will subdue the power of the workers and peasants once they have learnt to deal with the landowners and capitalists.

Thus, the campaign against the Peace of Versailles, the campaign against all the capitalists and landowners of every country and against their oppression of other countries, has not been in vain. Millions upon millions of workers and peasants in all lands have been watching this and giving it thought, and they now look upon the Soviet Republic as their deliverer. They say: the Red Army has shown that it can give blow for blow, though it was not strong enough for victory in the first year or, you might

even say, in the first month of its peaceful construction. That first month of peaceful construction, however, will be followed by many years, and with each passing year its strength will multiply tenfold. It was thought that the Peace of Versailles was one of the all-powerful imperialists, but after the summer of 1920 it became clear that they were weaker than the workers and peasants of even a weak country who know how to unite their forces and repulse the capitalists. In the summer of 1920 Soviet Russia showed herself as a force that not only defended herself against attack, against the onslaught of the Polish whiteguards, but showed herself in fact as a world force capable of smashing the Treaty of Versailles and freeing hundreds of millions of people in most countries of the world. That is the significance of the Red Army's campaign of this summer. That is why events took place in Britain during this war, which marked a turning-point in the whole of British policy. When we refused to halt our troops Britain replied by threatening to send her fleet against Petrograd. The order was given to attack Petrograd. That is what the British Prime Minister announced to Comrade Kamenev, and all countries were notified. But on the day following the dispatch of this telegram, mass meetings were held throughout Britain, and Councils of Action sprang up. The workers united. All the British Mensheviks, who are even viler than the Russian brand, and fawn upon the capitalists far more assiduously—even they had to join in, because the workers were demanding it, because the British workers said they would not tolerate a war against Russia. All over Britain Councils of Action were formed, the British imperialists' war plans were frustrated, and it once more turned out that, in her war against the imperialists of all lands, Soviet Russia has allies in each of them. When we Bolsheviks said: "We are not alone in our revolt against the landowners and capitalists of Russia, because in every country we have allies—the worker and peasant; those allies are to be found in most countries", we were ridiculed and were asked: "Where are these working people?" Yes, it is true that in Western Europe, where the capitalists are far stronger and live by fleecing hundreds of millions in the colonies, it is far

more difficult to rise up in revolt. There the working-class revolution is developing incomparably more slowly. Nevertheless, it is developing. When, in July 1920, Britain threatened Russia with war, the British workers prevented that war from taking place. The British Mensheviks followed the lead of the British Bolsheviks. They had to do so and come out against the Constitution, against the law declaring they would not tolerate the war. If the latter was declared on the morrow, they would call a strike and give no coal to Britain and to France as well. The British workers declared that they wanted to determine foreign policy; they are directing it in the same way as the Bolsheviks in Russia, and not like the capitalists in other countries.

That is an example of what the Polish war has brought to light. That is why we have emerged victorious within six months. That is why devastated, weak and backward Soviet Russia is defeating an alliance of states infinitely more powerful than she is. That is because they lack strength at home, and the workers, the working people in general, are against them. This is apparent at every crisis. This is apparent because they are robbers who attack each other and cannot unite against us; because, in the final analysis, private property divides people and brutalises them, whereas labour unites them. Labour has not only united the workers and peasants of Russia, it has united them with the workers and peasants of all lands. Consequently, in all these countries the people can now see that Soviet Russia is a force that is smashing the Peace of Versailles. Soviet Russia will become stronger, and the Treaty of Versailles will collapse just as it all but collapsed at the first blow by the Red Army in July 1920. That is why the Polish war has ended in a manner no imperialist state had bargained for. This is a lesson of the utmost importance to us, for it shows by the example and behaviour of all countries taking part in international politics that our cause is strong; that no matter what attempts are made to invade Russia and no matter what military moves are made against us—and in all probability many more will be made—all these attempts will go up in smoke as we know from our actual experience, which has steeled us.

After every such attempt by our enemies, we shall emerge stronger than ever.

I shall now turn from international politics, where the clash with the Peace of Versailles demonstrated our strength, to problems that are more immediate and practical, to the situation which has arisen in connection with the Treaty of Versailles. I shall not dwell on the significance of the Second Congress of the Communist International, which took place in Moscow in July, a congress of the Communists of the whole world, and also of the Congress of the Peoples of the East, which took place afterwards in Baku.¹⁰⁷ These were international congresses which united the Communists and showed that in all civilised countries and in all the backward countries of the East, the banner of Bolshevism, the programme of Bolshevism, the line of Bolshevik action are an emblem of salvation, an emblem of struggle to the workers of all civilised countries and the peasants of all the backward colonial countries. They showed that, during the past three years, Soviet Russia not only beat off those who fell upon her in order to throttle her, but won the sympathy of the working people of the whole world; that we not only defeated our enemies, but acquired and are still acquiring new allies daily and by the hour. That which was achieved by the congress of Communists in Moscow and by the Baku congress of Communist representatives of the peoples of the East cannot be immediately assessed or directly calculated, but it has been an achievement of greater significance than some military victories are, because it proves to us that the Bolsheviks' experience, their activities and programme, and their call for a revolutionary struggle against the capitalists and imperialists have won world-wide recognition; that which was achieved in Moscow in July and in Baku in September will for many months to come provide food for thought and assimilation by the workers and peasants of the world. This is a force which, in any conflict or crisis, will come out for Soviet Russia, as we have seen on more than one occasion. Such is the fundamental lesson of the Polish war, from the angle of the alignment of world forces.

In dealing with events at home, I must say that Wrangel is the chief force in the field against us. France, Poland and Wrangel joined forces against us. While our forces were wholly engaged in the war on the Western front, Wrangel mustered his forces, aided by the French and British navies. When Wrangel was approaching the Kuban, he was counting on support from the rich Cossack kulaks. Who helped Wrangel at the time? Who supplied him with fuel and a fleet to enable him to hold on to the Donets Basin? It was the British and the American navies. We know, however, that this landing operation failed, because the Kuban Cossack, though he was rich in grain, saw perfectly through those promises of a constituent assembly, rule by the people and the other fine things that the Mensheviks, the Socialist-Revolutionaries, etc., try to fool simpletons with. Perhaps the Kuban peasants believed them while they were holding forth so eloquently, but in the long run they put their faith in action not words, and saw that though the Bolsheviks were severe people to deal with, they were to be preferred. As a result, Wrangel fled from the Kuban, and many hundreds and thousands of his troops were shot. Despite this, Wrangel assembled more and more of his forces in the Crimea, his troops consisting in the main of officers. He hoped that, at the first favourable moment, it would be possible to build up these forces, provided they had the backing of the peasants.

Wrangel's troops are better equipped with guns, tanks, and aircraft than all the other armies that fought in Russia. Wrangel was assembling his forces when we were fighting the Poles; that is why I say that the peace with Poland is unstable. According to the preliminary peace signed on the 12th, the armistice will come into force only on the 18th, and the Poles still have two days in which they can repudiate it. The entire French press and the capitalists there are striving to get Poland to start a new war against Soviet Russia; Wrangel is hastening to use all his connections in order to wreck this peace, because he can see that when the war with Poland is ended the Bolsheviks will turn against him. The only practical conclusion for us, therefore, is to direct all our forces against

Wrangel. In April this year we proposed peace on terms which were unfavourable to us, only in order to spare tens of thousands of workers and peasants the carnage of a new war. To us frontiers do not matter so much; we do not mind losing some territory in the frontier regions. To us it is more important to preserve the lives of tens of thousands of workers and peasants and to retain the possibility of peaceful construction, than to keep a small piece of territory. That is why we submitted this peace proposal and now repeat that Wrangel is the main threat, that his troops, which have meanwhile grown enormously in strength, are fighting desperately, at points have crossed the Dnieper and have assumed the offensive. The Wrangel front and the Polish front are one and the same thing, and the question of the war against Wrangel is a question of the war against Poland; to convert the preliminary peace with Poland into a permanent peace we must crush Wrangel in the shortest possible space of time. If that is not done, we cannot be certain that the Polish landowners and capitalists, under pressure from the French landowners and capitalists and with their help, will not once again try to embroil us in war. That is why I am taking advantage of this broadly representative meeting to draw your attention to this fundamental question and to ask you to make use of your position and authority in order to influence the masses of workers and peasants and ensure that the greatest possible efforts are made towards the full accomplishment of our immediate task—at all costs to crush Wrangel in the shortest space of time, because the possibility of our engaging in the work of peaceful construction depends only on this.

Published in 1920 in the book:
Verbatim Reports of the Plenary Sessions of the Moscow Soviet of Workers', Peasants' and Red Army Deputies

Collected Works, Vol. 31,
pp. 318-32

LETTER TO G. V. CHICHERIN

Comrade Chicherin,

The news from Britain, especially from Krasin (and newspaper cuttings), and particularly the news that America will join immediately (the trade agreement between Russia and Britain) raises the urgent and extremely important issue of a trade agreement with Britain.¹⁰⁸

If it is a question of peace or war,* it must be connected with Batumi and Georgia.¹⁰⁹

Then, the question of debts must be made *absolutely clear*, so that they do not oblige us to pay.

If there is to be a trade agreement, *who* will have the right to sign the *final text*? Krasin alone? Or the Council of People's Commissars?

This *question* must be quickly prepared *in all its aspects*.

With Communist greetings,

Lenin

November 19 [1920]

First published in 1959
in *Lenin Miscellany XXXVI*

Published according to the
text of the *Miscellany*

* The last three words are in English in the original.—*Ed.*

**THE BEGINNING OF THE PERIOD
OF THE PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE
OF THE TWO SYSTEMS**

**THE STRUGGLE OF THE SOVIET STATE
TO ESTABLISH ECONOMIC AND DIPLOMATIC
RELATIONS WITH CAPITALIST COUNTRIES**

OUR FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POSITION AND THE TASKS OF THE PARTY

From a Speech Delivered to the Moscow
Gubernia Conference of the R.C.P.(B.),
November 21, 1920¹¹⁰

(Applause.) Comrades, in speaking of the international position of the Soviet Republic we naturally have to deal mainly with the Polish war and Wrangel's defeat. I think that at a meeting of Party workers who have, of course, followed the Party press and have frequently heard major reports on this question, there is no need and indeed it would be superfluous for me to speak in detail on this period or on each phase of the war against Poland, on the character of our offensives, or on the significance of our defeat at Warsaw. I presume that most of the comrades are so familiar with this aspect of the matter that I would only be repeating myself, which would be unsatisfactory to these comrades. I shall therefore speak, not on the various episodes and turns of our Polish campaign but on the results we now have before us.

After the Red Army's brilliant victories in the summer, the serious defeat at Warsaw, and the conclusion of a preliminary peace with Poland, which at this very moment, in Riga, is being or at least should be turned into a conclusive peace, the chances of that preliminary peace really becoming conclusive have greatly increased as a result of Wrangel's *débâcle*. Now that the latter has become an established fact the imperialist press in the Entente coun-

tries is beginning to show its cards and disclose what it has most of all kept in the dark.

I do not know whether you noticed a brief news item published in the papers today or some days ago to the effect that the newspaper *Temps*, mouthpiece of the French imperialist bourgeoisie, now speaks of the peace with Poland having been signed against France's advice. There can be no doubt that the French bourgeoisie's spokesmen are admitting a truth they would have preferred to cover up and indeed have covered up for a very long time. Despite the unfavourable terms of the Polish peace (which are more advantageous than those we ourselves offered to the Polish landowners this April in order to avoid any war), and they are indeed unfavourable as compared to what might have been achieved but for the extremely serious situation at Warsaw, we succeeded in getting terms that frustrate the greater part of the imperialists' overall plan. The French bourgeoisie have now acknowledged that they insisted on Poland continuing the war, and were opposed to the conclusion of a peace, because they feared the rout of Wrangel's army and wished to support a new intervention and campaign against the Soviet Republic. Though Polish imperialism's conditions have impelled it to go to war against Russia—despite this—the French imperialists' plans have collapsed, and as a result we now have gained something more than a mere breathing-space.

Of the small states formerly belonging to the Russian Empire, Poland is among those that have been most of all at odds with the Great-Russian nation during the last three years, and made the greatest claims to a large slice of territory inhabited by non-Poles. We concluded peace with Finland, Estonia and Latvia also against the wishes of the imperialist Entente, but this was easier because the bourgeoisie of Finland, Estonia and Latvia entertained no imperialist aims that would call for a war against the Soviet Republic, whereas the Polish bourgeois republic had an eye, not only to Lithuania and Byelorussia but the Ukraine as well. Furthermore, it was impelled along the same direction by the age-old struggle of Poland, who used to be a great power and is now pitting herself against another great power—Russia. Even at present, Poland

cannot hold back from this age-long struggle. That is why Poland has been far more bellicose and stubborn in her war plans against our Republic, and why our present success in concluding peace against the wishes of the Entente is so much more resounding. Among the states which have preserved the bourgeois system and border on Russia, there is no other country but Poland on which the Entente can rely in a long-term plan of military intervention; that is why in their common hate of the Soviets all the bourgeois states are directly interested in having Eastern Galicia under the control of the Polish landed proprietors.

Moreover, Poland lays claim to the Ukraine and Lithuania. This gives the campaign a particularly acute and stubborn character. Keeping Poland supplied with war materials has, naturally, been the main concern of France and certain other powers, and it is quite impossible to estimate just how much money has gone into this. Therefore, the importance of the Red Army's final victory despite our defeat at Warsaw, is particularly great, for it has placed Poland in a position in which she is unable to prosecute the war. She has had to agree to peace terms that have given her less than those we proposed in April 1920, before the Polish offensive, when we, unwilling to discontinue our work of economic construction, proposed boundaries that were highly disadvantageous to us. At that time, the press of the petty-bourgeois patriots, to whose number both our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks belong, accused the Bolsheviks of submissiveness, and an almost Tolstoyan attitude displayed by the Soviet government. The latter term was used to qualify our acceptance of peace along the proposed Pilsudski line, which left Minsk in Polish hands, the boundary lying some 50 versts and at places some 100 versts east of the present line. Of course, I do not have to tell a meeting of Party workers why we accepted, and had to accept, worse boundaries if indeed our work of economic construction was to go on. The outcome was that, by waging war, Poland, which had retained her bourgeois system, brought about an acute dislocation of her entire economy, a tremendous growth of discontent, and a bourgeois reign of terror, not

only against the industrial workers but against the farm labourers as well. Poland's entire position as a bourgeois state became so precarious that there could be no question of continuing the war.

The successes scored in this respect by the Soviets have been tremendous. When, three years ago, we raised the question of the tasks and the conditions of the proletarian revolution's victory in Russia, we always stated emphatically that victory could not be permanent unless it was followed up by a proletarian revolution in the West, and that a correct appraisal of our revolution was possible only from the international point of view. For victory to be lasting, we must achieve the victory of the proletarian revolution in all, or at any rate in several, of the main capitalist countries. After three years of desperate and stubborn struggle, we can see in what respect our predictions have or have not materialised. They have not materialised in the sense that there has been no rapid or simple solution of the problem. None of us, of course, expected that such an unequal struggle as the one waged by Russia against the whole of the capitalist world could last for three years. It has emerged that neither side—the Russian Soviet Republic or the capitalist world—has gained victory or suffered defeat; at the same time it has turned out that, while our forecasts did not materialise simply, rapidly and directly, they were fulfilled insofar as we achieved the main thing—the possibility has been maintained of the existence of proletarian rule and the Soviet Republic even in the event of the world socialist revolution being delayed. In this respect it must be said that the Republic's international position today provides the best and most precise confirmation of all our plans and all our policy.

Needless to say, there can be no question of comparing the military strength of the R.S.F.S.R. with that of all the capitalist powers. In this respect we are incomparably weaker than they are, yet, after three years of war, we have forced almost all of these states to abandon the idea of further intervention. This means that what we saw as possible three years ago, while the imperialist war was not yet over, i.e., a highly protracted situation, without any final decision one way or the other, has come about.

That has been, not because we have proved militarily stronger and the Entente weaker, but because throughout this period the disintegration in the Entente countries has intensified, whereas our inner strength has grown. This has been confirmed and proved by the war. The Entente was unable to fight us with its own forces. The workers and peasants of the capitalist countries could not be forced to fight us. The bourgeois states were able to emerge from the imperialist war with their bourgeois regimes intact. They were able to stave off and delay the crisis hanging over them, but basically they so undermined their own position that, despite all their gigantic military forces, they had to acknowledge, after three years, that they were unable to crush the Soviet Republic with its almost non-existent military forces. It has thus turned out that our policy and our predictions have proved fundamentally correct in all respects and that the oppressed people in any capitalist country have indeed shown themselves our allies, for it was they who stopped the war. Without having gained an international victory, which we consider the only sure victory, we are in a position of having won conditions enabling us to exist side by side with capitalist powers, who are now compelled to enter into trade relations with us. In the course of this struggle we have won the right to an independent existence.

Thus a glance at our international position as a whole will show that we have achieved tremendous successes and have won, not only a breathing-space but something much more significant. By a breathing-space we understand a brief period during which the imperialist powers have had many opportunities to renew in greater force the war against us. Today, too, we do not underestimate the danger and do not deny the possibility of future military intervention by the capitalist countries. It is essential for us to maintain our military preparedness. However, if we cast a glance at the conditions in which we defeated all attempts made by the Russian counter-revolutionaries and achieved a formal peace with all the Western states, it will be clear that we have something more than a breathing-space: we have entered a new period, in which we have won the right to our fundamental international existence

in the network of capitalist states. Domestic conditions have not allowed a single powerful capitalist state to hurl its army against Russia; this has been due to the revolution having matured within such countries, preventing them from overcoming us as quickly as they might have done. There were British, French and Japanese armies on Russian territory for three years. There can be no doubt that the most insignificant concentration of forces by these three powers would have been quite enough to win a victory over us in a few months, if not in a few weeks. We were able to contain that attack only on account of the demoralisation among the French troops and the unrest that set in among the British and Japanese. We have made use of this divergence of imperialist interests all the time. We defeated the interventionists only because their interests divided them, thereby enhancing our strength and unity. This gave us a breathing-space and rendered impossible the complete victory of German imperialism at the time of the Peace of Brest-Litovsk.

These dissensions have become more aggravated of late, especially because of the project of an agreement on concessions with a group of American capitalist sharks, with the toughest of them, headed by a multimillionaire who expects to form a group of multimillionaires.¹¹¹ We know that almost all reports from the Far East bear witness to the extreme resentment felt in Japan over the conclusion of this agreement, although so far there has been no agreement, but only the draft of one. Japanese public opinion, however, is already seething, and today I read a communication which says that Japan is accusing Soviet Russia of wanting to set Japan against America.

We have correctly appraised the intensity of the imperialist rivalry and have told ourselves that we must make systematic use of the dissension between them so as to hamper their struggle against us. Political dissension is already apparent in the relations between Britain and France. Today we can speak, not merely of a breathing-space, but of a real chance of a new and lengthy period of development. Until now we have actually had no basis in the international sense. We now have this basis, the reason being the attitude of the smaller powers that are com-

pletely dependent on the Great Powers both in the military and in the economic sense. It now appears that, despite the pressure brought to bear by France, Poland has signed a peace with us. The Polish capitalists have a hate of Soviet power; they crush the most ordinary strikes with unparalleled ferocity. They want war with Soviet Russia more than anything else, yet they prefer to make peace with us rather than carry out the conditions set by the Entente. We see that the imperialist powers dominate the whole world although they comprise an insignificant part of the world's population. The fact that a country has appeared that for three years has resisted world imperialism has considerably changed the international situation; the minor powers—and they form the majority of the world's population—are therefore all inclined to make peace with us.

The entry of the socialist country into trade relations with capitalist countries is a most important factor ensuring our existence in such a complex and absolutely exceptional situation.

I have had occasion to observe a certain Spargo, an American social-chauvinist close to our Right Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, one of the leaders of the Second International and member of the American Socialist Party, a kind of American Alexinsky, and author of a number of anti-Bolshevik books, who has reproached us—and has quoted the fact as evidence of the complete collapse of communism—for speaking of transactions with capitalist powers. He has written that he cannot imagine better proof of the complete collapse of communism and the breakdown of its programme. I think that anybody who has given thought to the matter will say the reverse. No better proof of the Russian Soviet Republic's material and moral victory over the capitalists of the whole world can be found than the fact that the powers that took up arms against us because of our terror and our entire system have been compelled, against their will, to enter into trade relations with us in the knowledge that by so doing they are strengthening us. This might have been advanced as proof of the collapse of communism only if we had promised, with the forces of Russia alone, to transform the

whole world, or had dreamed of doing so. However, we have never harboured such crazy ideas and have always said that our revolution will be victorious when it is supported by the workers of all lands. In fact, they went half-way in their support, for they weakened the hand raised against us, yet in doing so they were helping us.

I shall not dwell any further on this question but shall only remark that at the moment conditions in the Caucasus are becoming most complex and extremely difficult to analyse, with the likelihood that war may be forced on us any day. But with the peace with Poland almost assured and Wrangel wiped out, this war cannot be so alarming and, if forced on us, only promises to strengthen and fortify our position even more. Newspaper reports of events in Armenia and Turkey give us some idea of this. An extremely confused situation has arisen, but I am absolutely confident that we shall emerge from it, preserving peace on the present basis, which in some respects is extremely favourable, on a basis that is satisfactory to us and permits our economic existence. We are doing all we can to ensure this. It is, however, quite likely that circumstances may arise which will directly force war on us or indirectly lead to it. We can view this prospect quite calmly —this will be a war in a distant region, with the balance of forces fully in our favour, probably ensuring greater advantages than the Polish war. The Polish war was a war on two fronts, with a threat from Wrangel, and it could not be called peripheral, because the Pilsudski line did not run so far from Moscow. With this, I shall conclude my review of the international situation.

Published in 1920 in the pamphlet:
*Current Questions of the Party's
Present Work*. Published
by the Moscow Committee, R.C.P. (B.)

Collected Works, Vol. 31.
pp. 408-15

THE EIGHTH ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS OF SOVIETS¹¹²

DECEMBER 22-29, 1920

1

REPORT ON CONCESSIONS DELIVERED TO THE R.C.P.(B.) GROUP AT THE EIGHTH CONGRESS OF SOVIETS DECEMBER 21

Comrades, I think you have made a fully correct decision by preferring the discussion on concessions to be held first in the Party group. To the best of our knowledge, the question of concessions has everywhere aroused considerable concern and even anxiety, not only in Party circles and among the working-class masses but also among the masses of the peasantry. All comrades have pointed out that, since the decree of November 23 of this year, the questions most frequently raised and the written questions submitted at most meetings held on a variety of subjects have dealt with concessions, and the general tone of the questions, as well as of talk on the subject, has been one of apprehension: we have driven out our own capitalists, and now we want to admit others. I believe that this apprehension, this widespread interest in concessions—displayed, not only by Party comrades but by many others—is a good sign, which shows that in three years of incredibly hard struggle the workers' and peasants' state power has become so strong and our experience of the capitalists has become so fixed in the mind that the broad masses consider the workers' and peasants' state power stable enough to manage without concessions; they also consider their lesson learnt well enough to avoid any deals with the capitalists

unless there is a dire necessity to do so. This sort of supervision from below, this kind of apprehension emanating from the masses, and this kind of anxiety among non-Party circles show the highly vigilant attention that is being paid to relations between us and the capitalists. I believe that on this score we should absolutely welcome this apprehension as revealing the temper of the masses.

Yet I think that we shall come to the conclusion that, in the question of concessions, we cannot be guided by this revolutionary instinct alone. When we have analysed all aspects of the question we shall see that the policy we have adopted—the policy of offering concessions—is the correct one. I can tell you briefly that the main subject of my report—or rather the repetition of a talk I had very recently in Moscow with several hundred leading executives,¹¹³ because I have not prepared a report and cannot present it to you—the main subject of this talk is to offer proof of two premises: first, that any war is merely the continuation of peacetime politics by other means, and second, that the concessions which we are giving, which we are forced to give, are a continuation of war in another form, using other means. To prove these two premises, or rather to prove only the second because the first does not require any special proof, I shall begin with the political aspect of the question. I shall dwell on those relations existing between the present-day imperialist powers, which are important for an understanding of present-day foreign policy in its entirety, and of our reasons for adopting this policy.

The American Vanderlip sent a letter to the Council of People's Commissars in which he said that the Republicans, members of the Republican Party of America, the party of the banking interests, which is linked with memories of the war against the Southern States for liberation, were not in power at the time. He wrote this before the November elections, which he hoped the Republicans would win (they have won them) and have their own president in March. The Republicans' policy, he went on, would not repeat the follies that had involved America in European affairs, they would look after their own interests. American interests would lead them to a clash with Japan, and they would fight Japan. It might interest you to know, he went

on, that in 1923 the U.S. navy would be stronger than Britain's. To fight, they needed control of oil, without which they could not wage a modern war. They not only needed oil, but also had to take steps to ensure that the enemy did not get any. Japan was in a bad way in that respect. Somewhere near Kamchatka there is an inlet (whose name he had forgotten) with oil deposits, and they did not want the Japanese to get that oil. If we sold them that land, Vanderlip could vouch that the Americans would grow so enthusiastic that the U.S. would immediately recognise our government. If we offered a concession, and did not sell them the land, he could not say that they would refuse to examine the project, but he could not promise the enthusiasm that would guarantee recognition of the Soviet Government.

Vanderlip's letter is quite outspoken; with unparalleled cynicism he outlines the point of view of an imperialist who clearly sees that a war with Japan is imminent, and poses the question openly and directly—enter into a deal with us and you will get certain advantages from it. The issue is the following: the Far East, Kamchatka and a piece of Siberia are *de facto* in the possession of Japan insofar as her troops are in control there, and circumstances made necessary the creation of a buffer state, the Far Eastern Republic.¹¹⁴ We are well aware of the unbelievable sufferings that the Siberian peasants are enduring at the hands of the Japanese imperialists and the atrocities the Japanese have committed in Siberia. The comrades from Siberia know this; their recent publications have given details of it. Nevertheless, we cannot go to war with Japan and must make every effort, not only to put off a war with Japan but, if possible, to avert it because, for reasons known to you, it is beyond our strength. At the same time Japan is causing us tremendous losses by depriving us of our links with world trade through the Pacific Ocean. Under such conditions, when we are confronted with a growing conflict, an imminent clash between America and Japan—for a most stubborn struggle has been going on for many decades between Japan and America over the Pacific Ocean and the mastery of its shores, and the entire diplomatic, economic and trade history of the Pacific Ocean and its shores

is full of quite definite indications that the struggle is developing and making war between America and Japan inevitable—we return to a situation we were in for three years: we are a Socialist Republic surrounded by imperialist countries that are far stronger than us in the military sense, are using every means of agitation and propaganda to increase hatred for the Soviet Republic, and will never miss an opportunity for military intervention, as they put it, i.e., to strangle Soviet power.

If, remembering this, we cast a glance over the history of the past three years from the point of view of the international situation of the Soviet Republic, it becomes clear that we have been able to hold out and have been able to defeat the Entente powers—an alliance of unparalleled might that was supported by our whiteguards—only because there has been no unity among these powers. We have so far been victorious only because of the most profound discord among the imperialist powers, and only because that discord has not been a fortuitous and internal dissension between parties, but a most deep-seated and ineradicable conflict of economic interests among the imperialist countries which, based on private property in land and capital, cannot but pursue a predatory policy which has stultified their efforts to unite their forces against the Soviets. I take Japan, who controlled almost the whole of Siberia and could, of course, have helped Kolchak at any time. The main reason she did not do so was that her interests differ radically from those of America, and she did not want to pull chestnuts out of the fire for U.S. capital. Knowing this weakness, we could of course pursue no other policy than that of taking advantage of this enmity between America and Japan so as to strengthen ourselves and delay any possibility of an agreement between Japan and America against us; we have had an instance of the possibility of such an agreement: American newspapers carried the text of an agreement between all countries who had promised to support Kolchak.¹¹⁵

That agreement fell through, of course, but it is not impossible that an attempt will be made to restore it at the first opportunity. The deeper and more formidable the communist movement grows, the greater will be the number

of new attempts to strangle our Republic. Hence our policy of utilising the discord among the imperialist powers so as to hamper an agreement or to make one temporarily impossible. This has been the fundamental line of our policy for three years; it necessitated the conclusion of the Peace of Brest-Litovsk, as well as the signing, with Bullitt, of a peace treaty and an armistice agreement most disadvantageous to us. This political line of conduct enjoins us to grasp at a proposal on the granting of concessions. Today we are giving America Kamchatka, which in any case is not actually ours because it is held by Japanese troops. At the moment we are in no condition to fight Japan. We are giving America, for economic exploitation, a territory where we have absolutely no naval or military forces, and where we cannot send them. By doing so we are setting American imperialism against Japanese imperialism and against the bourgeoisie closest to us, the Japanese bourgeoisie, which still maintains its hold on the Far Eastern Republic.

Thus, our main interests were political at the concessions negotiations. Recent events, moreover, have shown with the greatest clarity that we have been the gainers from the mere fact of negotiations on concessions. We have not yet granted any concessions, and shall not be able to do so until the American president takes office, which will not be before March; besides, we reserve the possibility of renouncing the agreement when the details are being worked out.

It follows, therefore, that in this matter the economic interest is secondary, its real value lying in its political interest. The contents of the press we have received goes to show that we have been the gainers. Vanderlip himself insisted that the concessions plan should be kept secret for the time being, until the Republican Party had won the elections. We agreed not to publish either his letter or the entire preliminary draft. However, it appeared that such a secret could not be kept for long. No sooner had Vanderlip returned to America than exposures of various kinds began. Before the elections Harding was candidate for the presidency; he has now been elected. The selfsame Harding published in the press a denial of the report that he was in touch with the Soviets through Vanderlip. That denial

was categorical, almost in the following words: I don't know Vanderlip and recognise no relations with the Soviets. The reason behind this denial is quite obvious. On the eve of the elections in bourgeois America, it might have meant losing several hundred thousand votes for Harding to become known as a supporter of an agreement with the Soviets, and so he hastened to announce in the press that he did not know any Vanderlip. As soon as the elections were over, however, information of a quite different kind began to come in from America. In a number of newspaper articles Vanderlip came out in full support of an agreement with the Soviets and even wrote in one article that he compared Lenin to Washington. It turns out, therefore, that in the bourgeois countries we have propagandists for an agreement with us, and have won these propagandists from among representatives of exploiters of the worst type, such as Vanderlip, and not in the person of the Soviet ambassador or among certain journalists.

When I told a meeting of leading executives what I am now telling you, a comrade just back from America where he had worked in Vanderlip's factories, said he had been horrified; nowhere had he seen such exploitation as at Vanderlip's factories. And now in the person of this capitalist shark we have won a propagandist for trade relations with Soviet Russia, and even if we do not get anything except the proposed agreement on concessions we shall still be able to say that we have gained something. We have received a number of reports, secret ones, of course, to the effect that the capitalist countries have not given up the idea of launching a new war against Soviet Russia in the spring. We have learnt that preliminary steps are being taken by some capitalist states, while whiteguard elements are, it may be said, making preparations in all countries. Our chief interest therefore lies in achieving the re-establishment of trade relations, and for that purpose we need to have at least a section of the capitalists on our side.

In Britain the struggle has been going on for a long time. We have gained by the mere fact that among those who represent the worst capitalist exploitation we have people who back the policy of restoring trade relations with Russia. The agreement with Britain—a trade agreement—has

not yet been signed. Krasin is now actively negotiating it in London. The British Government has submitted its draft to us and we have presented our counterdraft, but all the same we see that the British Government is dragging out the negotiations and that there is a reactionary military group hard at work there which is hindering the conclusion of trade agreements and has so far been successful. It is our prime interest and prime duty to support anything that can strengthen the parties and groups working for the conclusion of this agreement with us. In Vanderlip we have gained such a supporter, not by mere chance or because Vanderlip is particularly enterprising or knows Siberia very well. The causes here lie much deeper and are linked with the development of the interests of British imperialism, which possesses a huge number of colonies. This rift between American and British imperialism is deep, and it is our imperative duty to base ourselves on it.

I have mentioned that Vanderlip is particularly knowledgeable in respect of Siberia. When our talks were coming to a close, Comrade Chicherin pointed out that Vanderlip should be received because it would have an excellent effect on his further actions in Western Europe. Of course, the prospect of talking to such a capitalist shark was not of the pleasantest, but then I had had to talk very politely, by way of duty, even to the late Mirbach, so I was certainly not afraid of a talk with Vanderlip. It is interesting that when Vanderlip and I exchanged all sorts of pleasantries and he started joking and telling me that the Americans are an extremely practical people and do not believe what they are told until they see it with their own eyes, I said to him, half in banter: "Now you can see how good things are in Soviet Russia and you can introduce the same in America." He answered me, not in English but in Russian: "Mozhet byt."* "Why, you even know Russian?" He answered: "A long time ago I travelled five thousand versts through Siberia and the country interested me greatly." This humorous exchange of pleasantries with Vanderlip ended by his saying as he was leaving, "Yes, it is true Mr. Lenin has no horns and I must tell that to my friends

* Perhaps.—Ed.

in America." It would have seemed simply ridiculous had it not been for the further reports in the European press to the effect that the Soviets are a monster no relations can be established with. We were given an opportunity to throw into that swamp a stone in the person of Vanderlip, who favours the re-establishment of trade relations with us.

There has not been a single report from Japan that has not spoken of the extraordinary alarm in Japanese commercial circles. The Japanese public say that they will never go against their own interests, and are opposed to concessions in Soviet Russia. In short, we have a terrific aggravation of the enmity between Japan and America and thus an undoubted slackening of both Japanese and American pressure on us.

At the meeting of executives in Moscow where I had to mention the fact, the following question was asked. "It appears," one of the comrades wrote, "that we are driving Japan and America to war, but it is the workers and peasants who will do the fighting. Although these are imperialist powers, is it worthy of us socialists to drive two powers into a war against each other, which will lead to the shedding of workers' blood?" I replied that if we were really driving workers and peasants to war that would be a crime. All our politics and propaganda, however, are directed towards putting an end to war and in no way towards driving nations to war. Experience has shown sufficiently that the socialist revolution is the only way out of eternal warfare. Our policy, therefore, is not that of involving others in a war. We have not done anything justifying, directly or indirectly, a war between Japan and America. All our propaganda and all our newspaper articles try to drive home the truth that a war between America and Japan would be just as much an imperialist war as the one between the British and the German groups in 1914, and that socialists should think, not of defending their respective countries but of overthrowing the power of the capitalists; they should think of the workers' revolution. Is it the correct policy for us to use the discord between the imperialist bandits to make it more difficult for them to unite against us, who are doing everything in our power to accelerate that revolution, but are in the position of a weak socialist re-

public that is being attacked by imperialist bandits? Of course, it is the correct policy. We have pursued that policy for four years. The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was the chief expression of this policy. While the German imperialists were offering resistance, we were able to hold out even when the Red Army had not yet been formed, by using the contradictions existing between the imperialists.

Such was the situation in which our concessions policy in respect to Kamchatka emerged. This type of concession is quite exceptional. I shall speak later of the way the other concessions are taking shape. For the moment I shall confine myself to the political aspect of the question. I want to point out that the relations between Japan and America show why it is to our advantage to offer concessions or to use them as an inducement. Concessions presume some kind of re-establishment of peaceful agreements, the restoration of trade relations; they presume the possibility for us to begin direct and extensive purchases of the machinery we need. We must turn all our efforts to achieving this. That has not yet been done.

The comrade who has asked about the resumption of trade relations with Britain wants to know why the signing of the agreement with that country has been held up. My answer is that it is being delayed because the British Government is hesitant. Most of the trade and industrial bourgeoisie in Britain are in favour of relations being resumed and clearly realise that any action for war means taking enormous risks and speeding up the revolution. You will remember that during our drive on Warsaw the British Government presented us with an ultimatum, threatening to order its navy to sail against Petrograd. You will remember that Councils of Action sprang up all over Britain at the time and the Menshevik leaders of the British working class declared that they were against war and would not permit one. On the other hand, the reactionary section of the British bourgeoisie and the military clique at court are in favour of the war continuing. The delay in signing the trade agreement must undoubtedly be ascribed to their influence. I shall not go into all the details of these trade relations with Britain, or of this agreement on trade relations with Britain, because it would take me too far afield.

This delicate problem had recently to be very thoroughly discussed by the Central Committee of the Party. We have returned to it again and again, and our policy in this matter has been marked by the greatest degree of accommodation. Our aim now is to obtain a trade agreement with Britain so as to start more regular trade and be able to buy as soon as possible the machinery necessary for our extensive plan to rehabilitate the national economy. The sooner we do this the greater will be the basis ensuring our economic independence of the capitalist countries. At present, after having burnt their fingers in the armed invasion of Russia, they cannot think of an immediate resumption of the war. We must seize the opportunity and bend every effort to achieve trade relations even at the cost of maximum concessions, for we cannot for a moment believe in lasting trade relations with the imperialist powers; the respite will be temporary. The experience of the history of revolutions and great conflicts teaches us that wars, a series of wars, are inevitable. The existence of a Soviet Republic alongside of capitalist countries—a Soviet Republic surrounded by capitalist countries—is so intolerable to the capitalists that they will seize any opportunity to resume the war. The peoples are weary of the imperialist war and threaten to make their indignation felt if war continues, but the possibility of the capitalists being able to resume it in a few years is not precluded. That is why we must exert every effort to utilise the opportunity, since it exists, and conclude trade agreements. I can say the following here (this is not for record). I think that we shall ultimately emerge on top as a result of our firm stand that the Communist International is not a governmental institution. That is the more probable for the British bourgeoisie having to realise the ridiculousness of rising up against the Third International. The Third International was formed in March 1919. Its Second Congress was held in July 1920, following which the terms proposed in Moscow were made publicly known in all countries. An open struggle is going on for adhesion to the Communist International. The organisational foundations for the formation of Communist parties exist everywhere. In these circumstances, any attempt to present us seriously with an ultimatum that we get rid of

the Communist International is inexcusable. However, the emphasis laid on the matter shows where the shoe pinches and what displeases them in our policy. Even without that, we have known what it is in our policy that is not to their liking. The East is another question that can be spoken of at a Party meeting, and is alarming Britain. The latter wants us to give assurances that we will do nothing against Britain's interests in the East. We are willing and ready to give such an undertaking. As an example I might mention that the Congress of Peoples of the East, a Communist congress, took place, not in the R.S.F.S.R. but in Baku, in the independent republic of Azerbaijan. The British Government will have no reason to accuse us of doing anything against British interests. In their ignorance of our Constitution, they sometimes confuse the Azerbaijan Republic with the Russian Soviet Republic. Our laws are definite and precise on that score, and it will be easy to refute the false interpretations of the British ministers. However, there are still differences on this subject, and Krasin is engaged with the ministers in talks on these two sore points.

In July, when Poland was threatened with utter defeat, and the Red Army was about to crush her, the complete text of an agreement was presented by Britain, which in effect said that we had to declare as a matter of principle that we would not carry on official propaganda or do anything contrary to British interests in the East. That was to be laid down at a subsequent political conference, but at the moment they were concluding a definite trade agreement. They asked whether we would like to sign it. We replied that we would. Today we say again that we will sign such an agreement. The political conference will specify Britain's interests in the East. We also have certain interests in the East, and we shall set them forth in detail when the need arises. Britain cannot say outright that she is abandoning her July proposal and so she is dragging things out and concealing from her own people the truth about the negotiations. The outcome of the negotiations is uncertain and we cannot guarantee that an agreement will be signed. The very powerful court and military circles in Britain are opposed to the agreement. We are, however, proposing maximum concessions, and we believe it to be in

our interests to sign a trade pact and purchase with all possible dispatch some of the essentials for the restoration of the railways (i.e., locomotives), for the rehabilitation of industry, and for electrification. This is more important to us than anything else. If we achieve that, we shall become so strong in a few years that even, if the worst comes to the worst and there is armed intervention in a few years' time, it will fail because we shall be stronger than we are now. The line we in the Central Committee are following is one of maximum concessions to Britain. If these gentlemen think they will catch us breaking promises, we declare that our government will not carry on any official propaganda and that we have no intention of infringing on any of Britain's interests in the East. If they hope to derive some advantage from this, let them try; we shall not be the losers.

I now come to the question of the relations between Britain and France. These are confused. On the one hand, Britain and France belong to the League of Nations and are obliged to act jointly; on the other hand, whenever any tension arises they fail to do so. When Comrade Kamenev was in London conducting negotiations together with Krassin, this became quite obvious. France was in favour of supporting Poland and Wrangel, but the British Government declared it would not support France. Concessions are more acceptable to Britain than to France, which still aspires to get her debts paid back, while in Britain capitalists with any business sense no longer think about it. From that angle, too, it is to our advantage to use the dissension between Britain and France, and we must therefore insist on the political proposal of concessions to Britain. We now have a draft agreement on timber concessions in the Far North. Since there is no political unity between Britain and France, our position imposes on us the duty of even incurring a certain risk, if only we succeed in hampering a military alliance between Britain and France against us. A new war that Britain and France will support against us will be an immense burden on us (even if it ends, as the war with Wrangel has done, in our complete victory); it will hinder our economic development and worsen the condition of the workers and peasants. We must therefore be

ready to do whatever involves the least loss. Obviously, the losses from concessions are negligible compared with those that would arise from a delay in our economic development and the loss of thousands of workers and peasants that would ensue were we unable to withstand the alliance of the imperialists. Negotiations on concessions with Britain are one of the means of standing up to their alliance. That is the political aspect of the issue.

Last, the final aspect of the matter is the attitude of Britain and the entire Entente to Germany. If we exclude America, Germany is the most advanced country. In the development of electricity her technical level is even higher than America's. The conditions obtaining in Germany in consequence of the Treaty of Versailles make her existence impossible. Because of that situation it is natural for Germany to be prompted towards an alliance with Russia. When the Russian troops were approaching Warsaw, all Germany was seething. An alliance between Russia and Germany, a country that has been strangled, a country that is able to set gigantic productive forces in motion—this situation has led to a political mix up in Germany: the German Black Hundreds sympathise with the Russian Bolsheviks in the same way as the Spartacus League does. This can well be understood because it derives from economic causes, and is the basis of the entire economic situation and of our foreign policy.

While we stand alone and the capitalist world is strong, our foreign policy consists, on the one hand, in our having to utilise disagreements (to vanquish all the imperialist powers would, of course, be a most pleasant thing, but for a fairly long time we shall not be in a position to do so). On the one hand, our existence depends on the presence of radical differences between the imperialist powers, and, on the other, on the Entente's victory and the Peace of Versailles having thrown the vast majority of the German nation into a situation it is impossible for them to live in. The Peace of Versailles has created a situation in which Germany cannot even dream of a breathing-space, or of not being plundered, of not having the means of subsistence taken away from her, of her people not being doomed to starvation and extinction; Germany cannot even dream of

any of these things, so that, naturally, her only means of salvation lies in an alliance with Soviet Russia, a country towards which her eyes are therefore turning. They are furiously opposing Soviet Russia; they detest the Bolsheviks, and shoot down their own Communists in the manner of real whiteguards. The German bourgeois government has an implacable hatred of the Bolsheviks, but such is its international position that, against its own desires, the government is driven towards peace with Soviet Russia. That, comrades, is the second corner-stone of our international policy, our foreign policy; it is to show peoples that are conscious of the bourgeois yoke that there is no salvation for them without the Soviet Republic. Since the Soviet Republic withstood the onslaught of the imperialists for three years, this goes to show that one country, and that country alone, has been successful in hurling back this imperialist yoke. That country has been called a country of "robbers", "plunderers", "bandits", Bolsheviks, etc.—let that be so, but still it is impossible to improve the economic situation without that country.

In a situation such as this the question of concessions acquires still another aspect. The pamphlet I have in my hands is the Decree on Concessions¹⁴⁶ of November 23. It will be distributed to all members of the Congress. We intend to publish this pamphlet abroad, in several languages. It is our immediate object to do everything possible to arouse interest in concessions among the population of the greatest number of countries, to interest those countries that are the most oppressed. The divergence of interests between Japan and America is very great. They are unable to agree between themselves over China, a number of islands, etc. The divergence of interests between Germany and the Entente is of another kind. Germany's existence has been made impossible by the conditions in which the Entente has placed her. People are dying there because the Entente has been requisitioning their motors and their cattle. Such a situation urges Germany towards a *rapprochement* with Soviet Russia. I do not know the details of the treaty between Germany and the Entente, but in any case the treaty is known to ban direct trade relations between Germany and Soviet Russia. When we arranged for

the purchase of German locomotives, that was done through the agency of Sweden. Germany will hardly be able to restore direct trade relations with us before April 1921. However, progress in restoring our trade relations with Germany is more rapid than with the Entente. The conditions of existence in Germany are compelling the German people as a whole, including the Black Hundreds and the capitalists, to seek relations with Soviet Russia. Germany is already linked with us by certain trade relations. These links can become closer inasmuch as we are offering Germany agricultural concessions. It is therefore clear that we must advance concessions as an economic method, even irrespective of the measure in which we are able to put the project into effect. The interest in concessions is so obvious that even if we do not succeed in granting a single concession, or none of our agreements are put into effect (and even that is quite possible)—even in that case we shall still have gained something, and we still have to pursue our policy because by so doing we make it more difficult for the imperialist countries to attack us.

Irrespective of this, we must tell all the oppressed peoples that a handful of countries are overtly or covertly, consciously or unconsciously, strangling other peoples—this derives from the Treaty of Versailles—and these peoples are turning to us for help, and are becoming more and more aware of the economic necessity of an alliance with Soviet Russia against international imperialism. Agricultural concessions, therefore, are of a wider scope than the old bourgeois concessions; they are different from the old capitalist concessions. They remain capitalist in character inasmuch as we tell the German capitalists to bring so many tractors into our country, in exchange for which we shall give them so much excellent virgin land and grain. We are attracting capital with the prospect of tremendous profits. In this respect the concessions are a purely capitalist undertaking, but they acquire an immeasurably greater significance because Germany as a nation, Austria and other countries cannot exist because they need aid in food and because the entire people, irrespective of whether the capitalists make a profit of a hundred or two hundred per cent, can, despite anti-Bolshevik prejudices, see that the

Bolsheviks are establishing completely different international relations which make it possible for all oppressed peoples to rid themselves of the imperialist yoke. That is why our successes of the last three years will lead to still greater successes in foreign policy during the coming year. Our policy is grouping around the Soviet Republic those capitalist countries which are being strangled by imperialism. That is why our concessions proposal has more than a capitalist significance; that is why it is a hand held out, not only to the German capitalists with the offer, "Bring us hundreds of tractors and make as much as three hundred per cent on each ruble if you like"; it is a hand held out to oppressed peoples, an alliance of the oppressed masses, which is a factor in the future proletarian revolution. The doubts and fears that still exist in the advanced countries, which assert that Russia could risk a socialist revolution because she is a vast country with her own means of subsistence while they, the industrial countries of Europe, cannot do so because they have no allies—these doubts and fears are groundless. We say: "You now have an ally, Soviet Russia. Since we are granting concessions, this will be an alliance that will consolidate the alliance against world imperialism. This is a postulate that must not be lost sight of, it justifies our concessions policy and proves the need to grant concessions.

... Our economic interest in timber concessions in the Far North of European Russia is obvious; there are tens and even hundreds of millions of dessiatines of forest land which we are quite unable to exploit because we lack the railways, the means of production and the possibility of providing the workers there with food, but which could be exploited by a country that owns a big merchant fleet and could fell and saw timber properly and export it in tremendous quantities.

If we want to trade with foreign countries—and we do want to, because we realise its necessity—our chief interest is in obtaining as quickly as possible, from the capitalist countries, the means of production (locomotives, machinery, and electrical equipment) without which we cannot more or less seriously rehabilitate our industry, or perhaps may even be unable to do so at all, because the machinery

needed by our factories cannot be made available. It is with the motive of extra profit that we must attract the capitalist. He will get surplus profit—well, let him have that surplus profit; we shall obtain the fundamentals that will help strengthen us; we shall stand firmly on our own feet, and shall win in the economic field. We shall have to pay up if we want to get the best machinery, etc. What are we to pay with? We still dispose of gold reserves totalling several millions. You will see from the special plan for the electrification of Russia, drawn up for several decades, that this plan, together with the additional work for the rehabilitation of industry, will involve an approximate expenditure of something like 17,000 million gold rubles. Electrification alone will require the direct expenditure of more than 1,000 million rubles in gold. We cannot cover this with our gold reserves; it is extremely undesirable and dangerous for us to export foodstuffs because we have not got sufficient for our own industry, and yet this need has to be met. In this case there is no concession project economically more suitable for us than the forests of the Far North which cover an enormous area, and where the timber is rotting away and a total loss because we are economically unable to exploit these timber reserves. Timber, however, is of tremendous value on the world market. Besides, the Far North is also convenient politically because it is an outlying border area. This concession is convenient to us both politically and economically, and we must make the best possible use of it. At the Moscow Conference I have told you about, Milyutin said that negotiations with Britain about concessions in the north of European Russia are progressing. There are several scores of millions of dessiatines of standing timber there. If we grant three or five million dessiatines disposed chequerwise, we shall get an opportunity to derive advantage from up-to-date enterprises, an opportunity to learn, by stipulating that our technicians take part in the work; we shall thus gain a lot and make it difficult for capitalist powers that enter into deals with us to take part in military action against us, because war cancels everything, and should one break out we shall get possession of all the buildings, installations and railways

Any possible action against us by new Kolchaks, Denikins and others will not be made the easier.

The second type is agricultural concessions. With the exception of West Siberia with its vast expanses of excellent land, inaccessible to us because of its great distance from railways, there are in European Russia and along the River Ural alone (our Commissariat of Agriculture has taken the necessary steps and has calculated the amount of land we cannot cultivate, which is no less than 3,000,000 dessiatines along the River Ural, abandoned by entire Cossack villages as a result of the victorious culmination of the Civil War) excellent lands that must be brought under the plough, but which we cannot cultivate because of the shortage of draught animals and our weakened productive forces.

The state farms of the Don Region have about 800,000 dessiatines which we cannot cultivate; to cultivate this land we shall need a tremendous number of draught animals or entire tractor columns that we cannot put on the fields, while some capitalist countries, including those that urgently need foodstuffs—Austria, Germany and Bohemia—could put tractors to work and obtain excellent wheat in good season. We do not know to what extent we shall be able to carry that out. At present we have two tractor plants functioning, in Moscow and Petrograd, but in consequence of the difficult conditions that obtain they cannot produce tractors in large numbers. We could ease the situation by purchasing a greater number of tractors. Tractors are the most important means of effecting a radical change in the old farming methods and of extending the area cultivated. By such concessions we shall show a large number of countries that we are able to develop the world economy on a gigantic scale.

If our propaganda and our proposal do not meet with success, and if our proposal is not accepted, we shall still reap an advantage that is not only political but socialist as well. What is going on in the capitalist world is not only a waste of wealth, but madness and a crime, for in some countries there is a food surplus that cannot be sold because of currency revolutions, since money has depreciated in a number of countries that have suffered defeat. Huge

stocks of foodstuffs are rotting away, while tens of millions of people in countries like Germany are actually starving. This absurdity, this crime of capitalism, is becoming obvious to all capitalist countries and to the small countries that surround Russia. To the capitalist countries the Soviet Republic says: "We have hundreds of thousands of dessiatines of excellent land that can be ploughed with tractors; you have the tractors, the petrol and the trained technicians; we propose to all peoples, including the peoples of the capitalist countries, to make the rehabilitation of the economy and the salvation of all peoples from hunger their main object." If the capitalists do not understand this, it is an argument demonstrating the corruption, madness and criminal nature of the capitalist system. That will be of more than mere propaganda value: it will be a communist call for revolution, for it shows beyond doubt that capitalism is falling apart and cannot satisfy the people's needs, a fact that is more and more penetrating into the consciousness of all peoples. An insignificant minority of imperialist countries are growing rich, while a large number of other countries are actually on the verge of ruin. The world economy needs reorganisation, and the Soviet Republic comes forward with a plan of reconstruction, with the following incontestable business-like, and realisable proposal: "You are starving under capitalism, despite the fabulous wealth of machinery. We can solve the crisis by bringing together your machinery and our raw materials, but the capitalists are in the way. We have proposed to them that they should accept our offer, but they are holding back and wrecking our plan." That is the second type of concession, the agricultural or tractor type.

Mining concessions are the third type. These are indicated on the map of Siberia, with details of each area in which concessions are being considered. Siberia's mineral wealth is literally boundless, and at best, even given significant progress, we cannot exploit even a hundredth part of it for many years. The minerals are to be found in conditions that demand the best machinery. There are such products as copper ore, which the capitalists need badly for their electrical industry because it is in such short supply. It is possible to rehabilitate the world economy and

improve the world's technology if they enter into regular relations with us.

It is, of course, more difficult to implement these concessions, i.e., they present greater difficulties than timber or agricultural concessions do. As far as agricultural concessions are concerned, it is only a matter of a brief working period with tractors being used. Timber concessions are also easier, especially as they concern an area we cannot avail ourselves of; but mining concessions are frequently at no great distance from the railways, frequently in densely populated areas. Here the danger is serious and we shall weigh the pros and cons very carefully to see whether or not they should be granted; we shall do so on definite terms, for there is no doubt that concessions are a new kind of war. The capitalists are coming to us to wage a new kind of war—the very existence of the capitalists is in itself a war against the socialist world surrounding them. Capitalist enterprises in a socialist state are in the economic sense a war for freedom of trade, against the policy of compulsory deliveries, a war for private property against a republic that has abolished that property. On this economic basis there develop a variety of relationships (similar to the hostility between the Sukharevka Market¹¹⁷ and our institutions). We may be told that we are closing down the Sukharevka black market but opening up a number of other "Sukharevkas" by letting the capitalists in. We do not close our eyes to this, and say: if we have been victorious till now, if we were victorious when our enemies used every means to disrupt our enterprises, when there was disruption from within combined with that from without, then we must surely be able to deal with such things, to keep an eye on them when they are in certain limited areas and there are definite conditions and relations. We have practical experience of the struggle against military espionage and against capitalist sabotage. We fought against them when they were under cover in our own institutions; surely we shall be able to handle them when the capitalists have been let in according to a definite list and under definite conditions. We know, of course, that they will try to break these conditions, and we shall combat such infractions. But, comrades, concessions on a capitalist foundation

means war. Until we have overthrown capital in other countries, and while capital is much stronger than we are, its forces can be sent against us at any time and it can start another war against us. For this reason we have to make ourselves stronger, and to do that we must develop large-scale industry and get our transport going. In carrying this out, we are taking a risk; here we again have relations of warfare, of struggle, and if they try to undermine our policy, we shall fight them. It would be grossly mistaken to think that a peaceful agreement on concessions is a peaceful agreement with capitalists. It is an agreement concerning war, but an agreement that is less dangerous to us, besides being less burdensome for the workers and peasants, less burdensome than at the time when the best tanks and guns were being thrown into action against us; we must therefore use all methods, and, at the cost of economic concessions, develop our economic forces and facilitate our economic rehabilitation. The capitalists will, of course, not honour their agreements, say comrades who are afraid of concessions. It is quite impossible, of course, to be sure that the capitalists will honour agreements. It will be a war, and war is the ultimate argument, which in general remains an argument entering the relations of the socialist republic.

War threatens us at any hour. We are conducting peace negotiations with Poland, and there is every chance that peace will be concluded, or at least, to be more exact, the vast majority of chances are that peace will be concluded. There is no doubt, however, that the Savinkovs and the French capitalists are working to prevent the treaty from being signed. To the capitalists war is possible tomorrow if not today, and they would willingly start a war today if they had not learnt something from three years' experience. Concessions constitute a certain risk; they are a loss; they are the continuation of war. There is no doubt of this, but it is a war that is more to our advantage. When we have obtained a certain minimum of the means of production, locomotives and machines, then we shall be different, in the economic sense, from what we have been till now, and the imperialist countries will be still less dangerous to us.

We have been told that the concessionaires will create exclusive conditions for their workers, and supply them

with better clothes, better footwear, and better food. That will be their propaganda among our workers, who are suffering privation and will have to suffer privation for a long time to come. We shall then have a socialist republic in which the workers are poverty-stricken and next to it a capitalist island, in which the workers get an excellent livelihood. This apprehension is frequently voiced at our Party meetings. Of course, there is a danger of that kind, and it shows that concessions are a continuation of war and do not constitute peace. We have, however, experienced far greater deprivations and have seen that workers from capitalist countries nevertheless come to our country, knowing that the economic conditions awaiting them in Russia are far worse; surely, then, we ought to be able to defend ourselves against such propaganda with counter-propaganda; surely we should be able to show the workers that capitalism can, of course, provide better conditions for certain groups of its workers, but that this does not improve the conditions of the rest of the workers. And lastly, why is it that at every contact with bourgeois Europe and America we, not they, have always won? Why is it that to this day it is they who fear to send delegations to us, and not we to them? To this day we have always managed to win over to our side at least a small part of the delegations, despite the fact that such delegations consisted in the main of Menshevik elements, and that they were people who came to us for short periods. Should we be afraid of being unable to explain the truth to the workers?! We should be in a bad way if we had such fears, if we were to place such considerations above the direct interest which is a matter of the greatest significance as far as concessions are concerned. The position of our peasants and workers remains a difficult one. It must be improved. We cannot have any doubt on that score. I think we shall agree that the concessions policy is a policy of continuation of the war, but we must also agree that it is our task to ensure the continued existence of an isolated socialist republic surrounded by capitalist enemies, to preserve a republic that is infinitely weaker than the capitalist enemies surrounding it, thereby eliminating any possibility of our enemies forming an alliance among themselves for the struggle

against us, and to hamper their policies and not give them an opportunity to win a victory. It is our task to secure for Russia the necessary machinery and funds for the restoration of the economy; when we have obtained that, we shall stand so firmly on our own feet that no capitalist enemies can overawe us. That is the point of view which has guided us in our policy on concessions, the policy I have outlined.

First published in 1930

Collected Works, Vol. 31,
pp. 463-86

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FROM THE REPORT
OF THE ALL-RUSSIA CENTRAL EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE AND THE COUNCIL
OF PEOPLE'S COMMISSARS ON
FOREIGN AND HOME POLICY
DECEMBER 22

You all know, of course, how the Polish landowners and capitalists forced a war on us under the pressure and at the insistence of the capitalist countries of Western Europe, and not of Western Europe alone. You know that in April of this year we made peace proposals to the Polish Government, on terms which were incomparably more advantageous to it than the present terms, and that it was only under pressure of dire necessity, after our negotiations for an armistice with Poland had ended in a complete breakdown, that we were obliged to fight. Despite the heavy defeat our forces suffered near Warsaw, as a result of their undoubtedly exhaustion, this war has ended in a peace that is far more favourable to us than the one we proposed to Poland in April. A preliminary treaty with Poland has been signed, and negotiations are now under way for the conclusion of a final peace treaty. We certainly do not conceal from ourselves the danger presented by the pressure being exerted by some of the more stubborn capitalist countries and by certain Russian whiteguard circles with the aim of preventing these negotiations from ending in a peace. It should, however, be said that the Entente's policy, which aims at military intervention and the armed suppression of

the Soviets, is steadily coming to nought, and that we are winning over to our policy of peace a steadily increasing number of states which are undoubtedly hostile towards the Soviets. The number of countries that have signed peace treaties is increasing, and there is every probability that a final peace treaty with Poland will be signed in the immediate future. Thus, another severe blow will be struck at the alliance of the capitalist forces which are trying to wrench the power of government from us by means of war.

Comrades, you also know, of course, that the temporary setbacks we suffered in the war with Poland and the difficulty of our position at certain moments of the war were due to our being obliged to fight Wrangel, who was officially recognised by one imperialist power,¹¹⁸ and received vast material, military and other aid. To end the war as quickly as possible, we had to effect a rapid concentration of troops so as to strike a decisive blow at Wrangel. You, of course, know what dauntless heroism was displayed by the Red Army in surmounting obstacles and fortifications which even military experts and military authorities considered impregnable. The complete, decisive and remarkably swift victory the Red Army gained over Wrangel is one of the most brilliant pages in its history. That was how the war forced on us by the whiteguards and the imperialists ended.

It is with far greater assurance and determination that we can now set about a task that is dear to us, an essential task, one that has long been attracting us—that of economic development. We can do so with the assurance that the capitalist tycoons will not find it as easy to frustrate this work as in the past. Of course, we must be on our guard. In no case can we say that we are already guaranteed against war. It is not because of the absence of formal peace treaties that we are still without that guarantee. We are very well aware that the remnants of Wrangel's army have not been destroyed, that they are lying low close at hand, that they are under ward and tutelage, and are being reformed with the aid of the capitalist powers. We know that the whiteguard Russian organisations are working actively to re-create certain military units and, together with

Wrangel's forces, to prepare them for a new onslaught on Russia at a favourable moment.

That is why we must maintain our military preparedness under all circumstances. Irrespective of the blows already struck at imperialism, we must keep our Red Army in a state of combat readiness at all costs, and increase its fighting efficiency. The release of a certain section of the army and its rapid demobilisation does not, of course, militate against this. We rely on the tremendous experience gained by the Red Army and its leaders during the war to enable us now to improve its quality. And we shall see to it that although the army is reduced we shall retain a cadre whose maintenance will not entail an undue burden on the Republic, while at the same time, with the reduction in the number of effectives, we shall be in a better position than before, in case of need, to mobilise and equip a still larger military force.

We are certain that all the neighbouring states, which have already lost a great deal by supporting the whiteguard conspiracies against us, have learnt the hard lesson of experience and have duly appreciated our conciliatory spirit, which was generally considered as weakness on our part. Three years of experience have no doubt shown them that, while we are persistently striving for peace, we are prepared from the military point of view. Any attempt to start a war against us will mean, to the states involved, that the terms they will get following such a war will be worse than those they could have obtained without a war or prior to it. This has been proved in respect of several countries. This is an achievement we shall not forego, one that will not be forgotten by any of the powers surrounding us or in political contact with Russia. Thanks to this, our relations with neighbouring countries are steadily improving. You know that a final peace has been signed with a number of states bordering on the Western frontiers of Russia. These were part of the former Russian Empire, and the Soviet government has unequivocally recognised their independence and sovereignty, in conformity with the fundamental principles of our policy. Peace on such a basis has every chance of being far more durable than is to the liking of the capitalists and certain West-European states.

As regards the Latvian Government, I must say that at one time there was a danger of our relations becoming strained, so much so that the idea even arose of severing diplomatic relations. But the latest report from our representative in Latvia indicates that a change of policy has already taken place, and that many misunderstandings and legitimate causes of dissatisfaction have been removed. There is good reason to hope that in the near future we shall have close economic ties with Latvia, which will naturally be even more useful to us in our trade with Western Europe than Estonia and the other states bordering on the R.S.F.S.R.

I must also say, comrades, that during this year our policy in the East has been very successful. We must welcome the formation and consolidation of the Soviet Republics of Bukhara, Azerbaijan and Armenia,¹¹⁹ which have not only recovered their complete independence, but have placed the power of government in the hands of the workers and peasants. These republics are proof and corroboration of the fact that the ideas and principles of Soviet government are understood and immediately applicable, not only in the industrially developed countries, not only in those which have a social basis like the proletariat, but also in those which have the peasantry as their basis. The idea of peasants' Soviets has triumphed. The peasants' power has been assured: they own the land and the means of production. The friendly relations between the peasant Soviet Republics and the Russian Socialist Republic have already been consolidated by the practical results of our policy.

We can also welcome the forthcoming signing of a treaty with Persia, friendly relations with whom are assured by the fact that the fundamental interests of all peoples suffering from the yoke of imperialism coincide.

We must also note that friendly relations with Afghanistan, and still more so with Turkey, are being steadily established and strengthened. As for the latter power, the Entente countries have done everything they could to render impossible any more or less normal relations between her and the West-European countries. This circumstance, coupled with consolidation of the Soviets, is steadily

strengthening the alliance and the friendly relations between Russia and the oppressed nations of the East, despite the bourgeoisie's resistance and intrigues and the continuing encirclement of Russia by bourgeois countries. The chief factor in politics today is the violence being used by the imperialists against peoples which have not had the good fortune to be among the victors; this world policy of imperialism is leading to closer relations, alliance and friendship among all the oppressed nations. The success we have achieved in this respect in the West as well, in relation to more Europeanised states, goes to show that the present principles of our foreign policy are correct and that the improvement in our international position rests on a firm basis. We are confident that, by continuing our peace policy and by making concessions (and we must do so if we wish to avoid war), the basic line of our policy and the fundamental interests which stem from the very nature of imperialist policy will come into their own and will make it more and more imperative for the R.S.F.S.R. to establish closer relations with a growing number of neighbouring states, despite the intrigues and machinations of the imperialists, who, of course, are always capable of provoking a quarrel between us and some other state. Such relations are our guarantee that we shall be able to devote ourselves wholeheartedly to economic development and that we shall be able, for a longer period, to work calmly, steadfastly and confidently.

I must add that negotiations for the conclusion of a trade agreement with Great Britain are now under way. Unfortunately, these negotiations have been dragging out much longer than we would wish, but we are not at all to blame for that. When, as far back as July—at the moment the Soviet troops were achieving their greatest successes—the British Government officially submitted to us the text of an agreement assuring the establishment of trade relations, we replied by giving our full consent, but since then the conflict of the various trends within the British Government and the British state has held this up. We see how the British Government is vacillating, and is threatening to sever relations with us and immediately to dispatch warships to Petrograd. We have seen all this, but at the same time we

have seen that, in reply to this threat, Councils of Action have sprung up all over Great Britain. We have seen how, under pressure from the workers, the most extreme adherents of the opportunist trend and their leaders have been obliged to resort to this quite "unconstitutional" policy, one that they had themselves condemned a short while before. It appears that, despite the Menshevik prejudices which have hitherto prevailed in the British trade union movement, the pressure brought to bear by the working people and their political consciousness have become strong enough to blunt the edge of the imperialists' bellicose policy. Continuing our policy of peace, we have taken our stand on the proposals made by the British Government in July. We are prepared to sign a trade agreement at once; if it has not yet been signed, the blame rests wholly with those trends and tendencies in British ruling circles that are anxious to frustrate the trade agreement and, against the will of the majority, not only of the workers but even of the British bourgeoisie, want a free hand to attack Soviet Russia again. That is their affair.

The longer this policy is pursued by certain influential circles in Great Britain, by financial and imperialist circles there, the more it will aggravate the financial situation, the longer it will delay the semi-agreement which has now become essential between bourgeois Britain and the Soviet Republic, and the nearer it will bring the imperialists to a situation that will oblige them to accept a full agreement, not merely a semi-agreement.

Comrades, I must say that this trade agreement with Great Britain is connected with one of the most important questions in our economic policy, that of concessions. One of the important acts passed by the Soviet government during the period under review is the law on concessions of November 23, this year. You are, of course, all familiar with the text of this law. You all know that we have now published additional material, from which delegates to the Congress of Soviets can obtain full information on this question. We have published a special pamphlet containing, not only the text of the decree but also a list of the chief concessions we are offering: agricultural, timber and mining. We have taken steps to make the published text

of this decree available in the West-European countries as early as possible, and we hope that our concessions policy will also be a practical success. We do not in the least close our eyes to the dangers this policy presents to the Socialist Soviet Republic, a country that, moreover, is weak and backward. While our Soviet Republic remains the isolated borderland of the capitalist world, it would be absolutely ridiculous, fantastic and utopian to hope that we can achieve complete economic independence and that all dangers will vanish. Of course, as long as the radical contrasts remain, the dangers will also remain, and there is no escaping them. What we have to do is to get firmly on our feet in order to survive these dangers; we must be able to distinguish between big dangers and little dangers, and incur the lesser dangers rather than the greater.

We were recently informed that, at a Congress of Soviets of Arzamas Uyezd in Nizhni-Novgorod Gubernia, a peasant, not a member of the Party, said on the subject of concessions: "Comrades, we are delegating you to the All-Russia Congress and declare that we peasants are prepared to endure hunger and cold and do our duty for another three years, but don't sell Mother Russia in the form of concessions." I heartily welcome such sentiments, which are very widespread. I think it is highly indicative that during these three years the masses of non-Party working people—not only industrial workers but peasants as well—have acquired the political and economic experience which enables and compels them to value their liberation from the capitalists above all else, which compels them to exercise redoubled caution and to treat with extreme suspicion every step that involves the possibility of new dangers of the restoration of capitalism. Of course, we give the greatest consideration to all declarations of this kind, but we must say that there is no question of selling out Russia to the capitalists. It is a question of concessions; any concessions agreement is limited to a definite period and by definite terms. It is hedged around with all possible guarantees, by guarantees that have been carefully considered and will be considered and discussed with you again and again, at the present Congress and at various other conferences. These temporary agreements have nothing to do with any selling out.

There is not a hint in them of selling Russia. What they do represent is a certain economic concession to the capitalists, the purpose of which is to enable us, as soon as possible, to secure the necessary machinery and locomotives without which we cannot effect the restoration of our economy. We have no right to neglect anything that may, in however small a measure, help us to improve the conditions of the workers and peasants.

We must do all we possibly can to bring about the rapid restoration of trade relations, and negotiations are at present being carried on in a semi-legal framework. We are ordering locomotives and machines in far from adequate numbers, but we have begun to order them. When we conduct these negotiations officially, the possibilities will be vastly expanded. With the aid of industry we shall achieve a great deal, and in a shorter period; but even if the achievements are very great, the period will cover years, a number of years. It must be borne in mind that although we have now gained a military victory and have secured peace, history teaches us that no big question has ever been settled, and no revolution accomplished, without a series of wars. And we shall not forget this lesson. We have already taught a number of powerful countries not to wage war on us, but we cannot guarantee that this will be for long. The imperialist predators will attack us again if there is the slightest change in the situation. We must be prepared for it. Hence, the first thing is to restore the economy and place it firmly on its feet. Without equipment, without machinery obtained from capitalist countries, we cannot do this rapidly. And we should not grudge the capitalist a little extra profit if only we can effect this restoration. The workers and peasants must share the sentiments of those non-Party peasants who have declared that they are not afraid to face sacrifice and privation. Realising the danger of capitalist intervention, they do not regard concessions from a sentimental point of view, but as a continuation of the war, as the transfer of the ruthless struggle to another plane; they see in them the possibility of fresh attempts on the part of the bourgeoisie to restore the old capitalism. That is splendid; it is a guarantee that not only the organs of Soviet power but all the workers and peasants will make

it their business to keep watch and ward over our interests. We are, therefore, confident that we shall be able to place the protection of our interests on such a basis that the restoration of the power of the capitalists will be totally out of the question even in carrying out the concessions agreements; we shall do everything to reduce the danger to a minimum, and make it less than the danger of war, so that it will be difficult to resume the war and easier for us to restore and develop our economy in a shorter period, in fewer years (and it is a matter of a good many years).

Published in 1921 in the book
*The Eighth All-Russia Congress
of Soviets. Verbatim Report*

*Collected Works, Vol. 31,
pp. 487-95*

FROM THE SPEECH
DELIVERED AT THE FOURTH ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS
OF GARMENT WORKERS
FEBRUARY 6, 1921¹²⁰

Comrades, it gives me great pleasure to greet your Congress on behalf of the Central Committee of our Party and of the Council of People's Commissars. What gives me even greater pleasure is your unanimous decision of yesterday, following the happy reconciliation and successful resolution of the conflict and the friction among you, which required such strenuous efforts from all, and some from our Party as well. I am sure, comrades, that this slight clash and its successful settlement will be an earnest that in your future work, as members of the union and of the Party, you will be able to solve all the numerous difficulties and problems that still lie ahead of us.

Comrades, speaking of the position of our Republic in general—of the internal and external position of the Soviet power—the greatest difficulties that confronted us were, of course, those of our external positions. The greatest difficulties of the entire proletarian revolution in Russia arose from our having had to take the initiative in the socialist revolution due to the course of the imperialist war and the preceding development of the first revolution in 1905; this imposed unprecedented difficulties on us, and on our country. You all know, of course—I think that in your branch of industry this is more evident to you than to the workers of other industries—you all know to what extent capital

is an international force, to what extent all the big capitalist enterprises, factories, shops, etc., all over the world are linked up together; this makes it obvious that in substance capital cannot be completely defeated in one country. It is an international force, and in order to rout it the workers must also make a concerted effort on an international scale. Ever since 1917, when we fought the bourgeois-republican governments in Russia, and ever since the power of the Soviets was established at the end of 1917, we have been telling the workers again and again that the cardinal task, and the fundamental condition of our victory is to spread the revolution to, at least, a few of the most advanced countries. And our main difficulties over the past four years have been due to the fact that the West European capitalists managed to bring the war to an end and stave off revolution.

We in Russia had particularly striking evidence of the extremely precarious position of the bourgeoisie during the imperialist war. We also heard that in all other countries it was the end of the war that marked the intensification of the political crisis, for then the people were armed and it was an opportune moment for the proletariat to have done with the capitalists at one stroke. For a number of reasons the West European workers failed to do this, and for nearly four years now we have had to defend our positions single-handed.

As a consequence, the difficulties that fell to the lot of the Soviet Republic of Russia were without number, because the military forces of the capitalists of the whole world (vastly superior to our own, of course) did all they possibly could to help our landowners. We know full well of the incredible hardships and privations the working class of Russia has had to bear, but if we are emerging today from more than three years of successfully repulsing their military invasions and overcoming their obstructions, we have a perfect right to say without any exaggeration that the worst of our difficulties are behind us. If in spite of their overwhelming military superiority, the capitalists of the world have failed to crush this weak and backward country in the course of three years, it was only because we have had the dictatorship of the proletariat and enjoyed

the massive sympathy of the working people all over the world, we can safely say, in every country without exception. And if the capitalists of the whole world have failed in their attempt to crush Soviet Russia, which was not a hard task for them because of their enormous military superiority, we can say, I repeat, that in the international sphere, the greatest danger-point of the whole Soviet revolution is past, the worst difficulties are over.

The danger is still there, of course; the negotiations for final peace are still dragging on and there are signs that a rather difficult period in these negotiations is setting in, for the French imperialists, in particular, are pressing on with their efforts to push Poland into another war, and are spreading all sorts of false rumours about Soviet Russia not wanting peace.

Actually, we have done everything to prove that we do; we signed the provisional terms several months ago, and they were such that everyone was surprised by our spirit of compromise. We are not going back on any point of these terms, but we shall certainly refuse to be soaked under the pretext of a division of the property which under tsarism had belonged to the Polish and to the Russian people, which at the time both groaned under the yoke of tsarism. That is something we cannot have. We accept a fair division of the property, which is to be regarded as common, and a part of the railway property, and consider as indisputable the need to restore to the Polish people all objects of cultural value to which they attach especial importance, and which had been stolen and carried off to Russia in the days of the tsar. We have always anticipated that difficult problems would arise in the settlement of this matter; but if under the pressure of the French imperialists the Poles want to create a conflict and sabotage peace at all costs, there is nothing we can do about it. If there is to be peace, good will must be shown on both sides, whether in the case of a very serious conflict within a separate alliance or between two states. If the Poles once again yield to the pressure of the French imperialists, then, I repeat, the effort to conclude peace may be frustrated. You are well aware, of course, what new difficulties will confront us if the French imperialists succeed in sabotaging this

peace; and we all know from a number of sources and reports that attempts are being made and enormous efforts are being exerted to this end, and that the foreign capitalists are spending millions upon millions to organise another invasion of Soviet Russia in the spring. We now have over three years' experience of the way these invasions are organised. We know that unless they have the aid of a neighbouring state, the foreign capitalists cannot hope to organise anything like a serious expedition, and the millions they have been handing out to the various groups headed by Savinkov, or to the group of Socialist-Revolutionaries who are publishing their newspaper in Prague and sometimes speak in the name of the Constituent Assembly, these millions will go down the drain, and they will have nothing to show for it but a lot of spoiled newsprint and wasted ink in various printing offices in Prague.

But there are countries like Rumania, which has not tried to fight Russia, and Poland, which is ruled by an exploiting class and a military clique of adventurers. We know that they cannot muster large forces against us, but we also know that what we prize most is peace and an opportunity to devote all our efforts to restoring our economy. So we must be extremely careful. We have the right to tell ourselves that the worst difficulties in international politics are behind us, but it would be extremely thoughtless to shut our eyes to the possibility of fresh attempts. Of course, now that we have eliminated the Wrangel front, and Rumania had not risked war when the odds were on her side, it is hardly likely that she will risk it now; but we must not forget that the ruling classes in Rumania and Poland are in a position which may be said to be bordering on the desperate. Both countries have been sold to foreign capitalists lock, stock, and barrel. Both are up to their ears in debt, and have no means of paying up. Their bankruptcy is inevitable. The revolutionary movement of the workers and peasants is growing steadily. Bourgeois governments in such straits have been known to rush headlong into the craziest adventures, for which there was no other explanation but their desperate and hopeless situation. That is why

we must still reckon with the possibility of fresh attempts at armed invasion.

Our conviction that these attempts will be frustrated, and that the position of the capitalist powers all over the world is, generally speaking, precarious, springs chiefly from the mounting economic crisis in all countries, and the growth of the communist working-class movement. In Europe, the revolution has not been following the same lines as ours. As I have said, the workers and peasants of the West European countries, who were in arms when the war ended, failed to strike in a swift revolution that would have been the least painful. The imperialist war, however, had so shaken the position of these states that not only has the economic crisis there not yet run its course, but there are signs that in every country without exception, even in the richest and most advanced, it will become even more acute next spring. Capital is an international evil, and just because of this all countries find themselves so grappled to each other that when some go down they tend to drag down the rest.

The rich countries have naturally waxed richer: during the war their capitalists piled up huge profits. But in the overwhelming majority of the European countries, trade has been dislocated and disrupted owing to the complete devastation not only of Russia, but even of Germany, and owing to the depression and the currency depreciation. The richest countries are suffocating, being unable to sell their industrial goods because of the depreciating currency, unemployment is growing to incredible proportions everywhere, and an unprecedented economic crisis is looming all over the world.

Meanwhile, the working class—which its capitalists had bribed by giving sizable hand-outs from their profits to the upper strata of the working class to entice it away from the revolution—is recovering from its blindness after the three-and-a-half-year war against Soviet Russia, while the communist movement is growing steadily and taking on depth not only in the parties, but also in the trade unions all over the world, although not as fast as we should like. The ruling classes all over the world are particularly apprehensive of the changes that are taking place in the trade

union movement. In Europe, they are not afraid of the prospect of facing a party that could lead the revolutionary proletariat, as was the case in the Russian revolution, when in the course of a few months, no, weeks, the Party was transformed from an illegal one into one commanding nation-wide forces, and backed by millions of people. Europe has not had such a party for years. But every capitalist sees the trade unions, and knows that they unite millions of workers and that the machinery of capitalism is bound to break down, unless the capitalists control them through the leaders who call themselves socialists but pursue the policy of the capitalists. This they know, feel and sense. The most telltale fact, for instance, was that in Germany the whole bourgeois press and the whole press of the social-traitors meeting in the Second International and calling themselves socialists, but loyally serving the capitalists, was whipped into a frenzy not so much because of Zinoviev's visit to Germany, as of that of the Russian trade unionists, for no one has stirred up the German trade unions to such an extent as they did on their first short visit to that country. This savage fury of the German bourgeois press and all the Communist-hating capitalists shows how precarious their position is. An international, world-wide struggle has flared up for influence with the trade unions, with millions of members in all civilised countries, for on them depends this inner work, which is not always readily perceptible. The inexorable growth of the economic crisis is deciding the fate of the capitalist countries.

The attempted coup by the German monarchist party was thwarted by the resistance of the German trade unions, when the workers who had followed Scheidemann and the murderers of Liebknecht and Luxemburg rose and crushed the military forces. As the economic crisis gains momentum, we find the same thing happening in Great Britain, and to a large extent in America as well. That is why it is the international situation that gives us most hope and conviction that the internal situation in the capitalist countries tends to sap all of their strength, and that our international position, which was difficult yesterday and remains such today, despite our great successes, will undoubtedly improve, and that we shall be able to devote all our efforts

to solving our internal tasks. I shall not enlarge on these tasks, because all of you who are engaged in industry are more familiar with the tasks of construction than I am, and it would be superfluous for me to deal with them at length.

First published in 1922 in the book:
Chetyvorty vserossiiski syezd rabochikh
shveinoi promyshlennosti.

Stenograficheski otchet
(The Fourth All-Russia Congress of
Garmet Workers,
February 1-6, 1921.
Verbatim Report), Petrograd

Collected Works, Vol. 32,
pp. 112-17

**FROM THE SPEECH AT A PLENARY MEETING
OF THE MOSCOW SOVIET OF WORKERS'
AND PEASANTS' DEPUTIES
FEBRUARY 28, 1921¹²¹**

Before going on to the domestic situation—a subject which, quite naturally, arouses great interest and much concern—let me run over the salient international developments. To be brief, I shall deal with only three. The first is our conference with Turkish delegates which has opened here in Moscow.¹²² This is an especially welcome fact, because there had been many obstacles to direct negotiations with the Turkish Government delegation, and now that there is an opportunity of reaching an understanding here in Moscow, we feel sure that a firm foundation will be laid for closer relations and friendship. Of course, this will not be achieved through diplomatic machinations (in which, we are not afraid to admit, our adversaries have the edge on us), but through the fact that over the past few years both nations have had to endure untold suffering at the hands of the imperialist powers. A previous speaker referred to the harm of isolation from the imperialist countries. But when a wolf attacks a sheep, there is hardly any point in advising the sheep to avoid isolation from the wolf (*Laughter, applause.*) Up to now, the Eastern peoples may have been like sheep before the imperialist wolf, but Soviet Russia was the first to show that, despite her unparalleled military weakness, it is not so easy for the wolf to get his claws and teeth into her. This example has proved to be catching for many nations, regardless of whether or not

they sympathise with the "Bolshevik rumour-mongers". We are a popular topic all over the world, and, in relation to Turkey, have even been described as malicious rumour-mongers. Of course, we have so far been unable to do anything in this sphere, but the Turkish workers and peasants have demonstrated that the resistance on the part of modern nations to plunder is a thing that has to be reckoned with: Turkey herself resisted plunder by the imperialist governments with such vigour that even the strongest of them have had to keep their hands off her. That is what makes us regard the current negotiations with the Turkish Government as a very great achievement. We have no hidden motives. We know that these negotiations will proceed within a very modest framework, but they are important because the workers and peasants of all countries are drawing steadily closer together, despite all the formidable obstructions. This is something we should bear in mind when assessing our present difficulties.

The second thing worth recalling in connection with the international situation is the state of the peace talks in Riga. You know that in order to conclude a peace with any degree of stability we have been making the greatest possible concessions to all the states formerly within the Russian Empire. This is very natural because national oppression is one of the main factors which arouses hatred for the imperialists and unites the peoples against them, and few states in the world have sinned as much in this respect as the old Russian Empire and the bourgeois republic of Kerensky, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries in alliance with the bourgeoisie. That is why it is in respect of these nations that we have shown the greatest willingness to make concessions and readiness to accept such peace terms, for which some Socialist-Revolutionaries have virtually called us Tolstoyans. We don't care, because we have to show the greatest willingness to compromise with these nations, to dispel the age-old suspicions generated by the old oppression, and to lay the foundation for a union of workers and peasants of various nations which once suffered together at the hands of tsarism and the Russian landowners, and now suffer at the hands of imperialism. In respect of Poland, this policy has been largely frustrated

by the Russian whiteguards, Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, who enjoy "freedom of the press", "freedom of speech" and other wonderful "freedoms", alongside the extraordinary freedom of the French and other capitalists to buy up a larger part of Poland, where they are at liberty to spread their propaganda in an effort to push Poland into a war against us. The capitalists are now doing their utmost to disrupt the peace that has been concluded. One of the reasons why we cannot demobilise our army, as we should like to do, is that we must reckon with the possibility of war on a much larger scale than some people imagine. Those who say that we need not put so much into defence are wrong, because our enemies are resorting to all sorts of machinations and intrigues to break up the final peace with Poland, the provisional terms of which have already been signed. These negotiations have lately been dragging on, and although a few weeks ago things had come to such a pass that there was reason to fear a serious crisis, we recently decided to make some further concessions, not because we thought they were warranted, but because we considered it necessary to thwart the intrigues of the Russian whiteguards, Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks in Warsaw, and of the Entente imperialists, who are making the greatest efforts to prevent peace. It has not yet been signed, but let me say that we have every reason to be optimistic: it will be signed in the near future, and we shall succeed in thwarting the intrigues against its conclusion. Although this is only guesswork on my part, I believe the prospect will gladden us all. But let us not count our chickens before they are hatched. That is why we shall not slacken or weaken our military effort however slightly, but we shall not be afraid to make a few more concessions to bourgeois Poland, so as to wrest the workers and peasants of Poland from the Entente and prove to them that the workers' and peasants' government does not deal in national strife. We shall defend this peace even at the price of considerable sacrifice.

The third international question is the events in the Caucasus. There have been large-scale developments there recently, and although we do not yet know the details their implication is that we are on the brink of a major war.

We were, of course, disturbed at the clash between Armenia and Georgia, for these events turned the Armenian-Georgian war into an insurrection, with a section of the Russian troops taking part. The upshot of all this was that, for the time being, the tables have been turned on the Armenian bourgeoisie, which had been scheming against us, so that, according to the latest but still unconfirmed reports, Soviet power has been established in Tiflis.¹²³ (*Applause.*) We know that the insurrection began in the neutral zone of Armenia, which lies between Georgia and Armenia, and which Georgia had occupied with the consent of the Entente imperialists. When the Mensheviks, particularly the Georgian Mensheviks, speak of the harm of isolation from the Western powers, they usually mean the reliance on the Entente imperialists, who are stronger than anyone else. But some whiteguards tend to forget that the advanced capitalists are more deceitful than anyone else, and say to themselves: can Armenia, the Armenian peasants, etc., or the ravaged Soviet Republic be compared to the united imperialist powers of the world? Let us turn to the advanced capitalists for they are the civilised forces of the world. That is how the Georgian Mensheviks seek to justify their unseemly defence of the capitalists, and they had control of the only railway line, the Armenian peasants' food supply line.

No one will have the patience to read all the telegrams, statements and protests we exchanged with Georgia on this question. If we had had a peace treaty with Georgia, our policy would have been to procrastinate as long as possible. You must understand, however, that the Armenian peasants did not view the treaty question in that light, and things culminated in the terrible insurrection which broke out in early February and spread with astonishing rapidity, involving not only Armenians, but also Georgians. There has been hardly any news from over there, but our assumptions have been borne out by the latest available report. We know perfectly well that the Georgian bourgeoisie and the Georgian Mensheviks do not rely for support on their working people, but on their capitalists, who are only looking for a pretext to start hostilities. Upon the other hand, we have had our stake on the working people for three

years and we shall continue to have it on them to the last even in this backward and oppressed country. With all our circumspection and all our efforts to strengthen the Red Army, we shall ultimately do everything possible to put out the flames in the Caucasus. We shall demonstrate in the East what we have been able to demonstrate in the West: when Soviet power is in, national oppression is out. On this, in the final analysis, depends the outcome of the struggle, and because of their superior numbers the workers and peasants will ultimately prove to be stronger than the capitalists.

Pravda No. 46,
March 2, 1921

Collected Works, Vol. 32,
pp. 147-51

TENTH CONGRESS OF THE R.C.P.(B.)¹²⁴

MARCH 8-16, 1921

FROM THE REPORT ON THE POLITICAL WORK OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE R.C.P.(B.)

MARCH 8

Assistance is on its way from the West-European countries but it is not coming quickly enough. Still it is coming and growing.

I pointed out this morning that one of the most important factors of the period under review, one closely related to the work of the Central Committee, is the organisation of the Second Congress of the Comintern. Of course, compared with last year, the world revolution has made considerable headway. Of course, the Communist International, which at the time of last year's Congress existed only in the form of proclamations, has now begun to function as an independent party in each country, and not merely as an advanced party—communism has become central to the working-class movement as a whole. In Germany, France and Italy the Communist International has become not only the centre of the working-class movement, but also the focus of political life in these countries. Any German or French newspaper you picked up last autumn contained abuse of Moscow and the Bolsheviks, who were called all sorts of names; in fact, the Bolsheviks and the 21 conditions for admission to the Third International¹²⁵ were made the central issue of their entire political life. That is an achievement no one can take away from us! It shows how the world revolution is growing and how it is paralleled by the aggravation of the economic crisis in Europe. But in any case, it would be madness on our part to assume that help will shortly arrive from Europe in the shape of a strong proletarian revolution, and I am sure no one here is mak-

ing such an assumption. In these last three years, we have learned to understand that placing our stake on the world revolution does not mean relying on a definite date, and that the accelerating pace of development may or may not lead to a revolution in the spring. Therefore, we must be able to bring our work in line with the class balance here and elsewhere, so as to be able to maintain the dictatorship of the proletariat for a long time, and, however gradually, to remedy all our numerous misfortunes and crises. This is the only correct and sober approach.

I shall now turn to an item concerning the work of the Central Committee during the present year which is closely related to the tasks facing us. It is the question of our foreign relations.

Prior to the Ninth Party Congress, our attention and all our endeavours were aimed at switching from our relations of war with the capitalist countries to relations of peace and trade. For that purpose we undertook all sorts of diplomatic moves and bested men who were undoubtedly skilled diplomats. When, for instance, the representatives of America or of the League of Nations proposed that we halt hostilities against Denikin and Kolchak on certain stated terms, they thought we would land in difficulties. In actual fact, it was they who landed in difficulties and we who scored a great diplomatic victory. They were made to look silly, they had to withdraw their terms, and this was subsequently exposed in all the diplomatic writings and press of the world. But we cannot rest content with a diplomatic victory. We need more than that: we need genuine trade relations. However, only this year has there been some development in trade relations. There is the question of trade relations with Britain, which has been central since the summer of last year. In this connection, the war with Poland was a considerable setback for us. Britain was ready to sign a trade agreement. The British bourgeoisie wanted it, but court circles in Britain were against it and hampered it, and the war with Poland delayed it. It so happens that the matter has not been settled yet.

Today's papers, I think, say that Krasin has told the press in London that he expects the trade agreement to be signed shortly. I do not know whether these hopes are fully jus-

tified. I cannot be certain that it will actually take place, but for my part I must say that we in the Central Committee have devoted a great deal of attention to this question and considered it correct for us to compromise in order to achieve a trade agreement with Britain. Not only because we could obtain more from Britain than from other countries —she is, in this respect, not as advanced as, say, Germany or America. She is a colonial power, with too great a stake in Asian politics, and is sometimes too sensitive to the successes of the Soviet power in certain countries lying near her colonies. That is why our relations with Britain are especially tenuous. This tenuousness arises from such an objective tangle of causes that no amount of skill on the part of the Soviet diplomats will help. But we need a trade treaty with Britain owing to the possibility opening up for a treaty with America, whose industrial capacity is so much greater.

The concession issue is bound up with this. We devoted far more attention to it last year than before. A decree of the Council of People's Commissars issued on November 23 set out the concession question in a form most acceptable to foreign capitalists. When certain misinterpretations or insufficient understanding of this problem arose in Party circles, a number of meetings of senior Party workers were held to discuss it. On the whole, there was not a great deal of disagreement, although we did hear of many protests from workers and peasants. They said: "We got rid of our own capitalists, and now they want to call in some foreign capitalists." Of course, the Central Committee had no statistics at its disposal to decide to what extent these protests were due to ignorance, or expressed the hopes of the kulak or outright capitalist section of the non-Party people who believe they have a legitimate right to be capitalists in Russia, and not like the foreign capitalists who are invited in without any power, but with real power. Indeed, it is most unlikely that statistics on such factors are available anywhere in the world. But this decree was, at any rate, a step towards establishing relations with a view to granting concessions. I must add that in practice—and this is something we must never forget—we have not secured a single concession. The point at issue is whether we should

try to get them at all costs. Whether we get them or not does not depend on our arguments or decisions, but on international capital. On February 1 of this year, the Council of People's Commissars took another decision on the concessions. Its first clause says: "To approve in principle the granting of oil concessions in Grozny and Baku and at other working oilfields and to open negotiations which should be pressed forward."

There was some difference of opinion on this point. Some comrades thought it was wrong to grant concessions in Grozny and Baku, as this would arouse opposition among the workers. The majority on the Central Committee, including myself, took the view that there were possibly no grounds for the complaints.

The majority on the Central Committee and I myself took the view that it was essential to grant these concessions, and we shall ask you to back it up with your authority. It is vital to have such an alliance with the state trusts of the advanced countries because our economic crisis is so deep that we cannot, on our own, rehabilitate our ruined economy without machinery and technical aid from abroad. Getting the equipment out here is not enough. We could grant concessions to the biggest imperialist trusts on a wider basis: say, a quarter of Baku, a quarter of Grozny, and a quarter of our best forest reserves, so as to assure ourselves of an essential basis by the installation of the most modern machinery; on the other hand, in return for this we shall be getting badly needed machinery for the remaining part. In this way we shall be able to close a part —say, a quarter or a half—of the gap between us and the modern, advanced trusts of other countries. No one, with anything like a sober view of the present situation, will doubt that unless we do this we shall be in a very difficult position indeed, and shall be unable to overtake them without a superhuman effort. Negotiations with some of the largest world trusts have already begun. Naturally, for their part they are not simply doing us a good turn: they are in it only for the fantastic profits. Modern capitalism—as a non-belligerent diplomat would put it—is a robber, a ring. It is not the old capitalism of pre-war days: because of its monopoly of the world market its profit margins run to

hundreds of per cents. Of course, this will exact a high price, but there is no other way out because the world revolution is marking time. There is no other way for us to raise our technology to the modern level. And if one of the crises were to give a sharp spur to the world revolution, and if it were to arrive before the concession terms ran out, our concession obligations would turn out to be less onerous than they appear on paper.

On February 1, 1921, the Council of People's Commissars decided to purchase 18,500,000 poods of coal abroad, for our fuel crisis was already in evidence. It had already become clear by then that we would have to expend our gold reserves not only on the purchase of machinery. In the latter case, our coal output would have increased, for we would have boosted our production if, instead of coal, we had bought machines abroad to develop our coal industry, but the crisis was so acute that we had to opt for the worse economic step and spend our money on the coal we could have produced at home. We shall have to make further compromises to buy consumer goods for the peasants and workers.

First published in 1921 in the book
"Desiaty syezd rossiiskoi kommunisticheskoi partii. Stenograficheski otchet"
(The Tenth Congress of the R.C.P. Verbatim Report), March 8-16, 1921,
Moscow

Collected Works, Vol. 32,
pp. 179-83

ON THE KRONSTADT REVOLT¹²⁶
SUMMARY OF A TALK WITH A CORRESPONDENT
OF THE NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE

I believe that there are only two kinds of government possible in Russia—a Government by the Soviets or a Government headed by a tsar. Some fools or traitors in Kronstadt talked of a Constituent Assembly, but does any man in his senses believe for a moment that a Constituent Assembly at this critical abnormal stage would be anything but a bear garden. This Kronstadt affair in itself is a very petty incident. It no more threatens to break up the Soviet state than the Irish disorders are threatening to break up the British Empire.

Some people in America have come to think of the Bolsheviks as a small clique of very bad men who are tyrannising over a vast number of highly intellectual people who would form an admirable Government among themselves the moment the Bolshevik regime was overthrown. This is a mistake, for there is nobody to take our place save butcher Generals and helpless bureaucrats who have already displayed their total incapacity for rule.

If people abroad exaggerate the importance of the rising in Kronstadt and give it support, it is because the world has broken up into two camps: capitalism abroad and Communist Russia.

Published in English
 on March 15, 1921
 in *The New York Herald Tribune*

No. 197

Published in Russian
 on March 26, 1921
 in *Petrogradskaya Pravda*
 No. 67

Collected Works, Vol. 36,
 p. 538

**TENTH ALL-RUSSIA CONFERENCE
OF THE R.C.P.(B.)¹²⁷**

MAY 26-28, 1921

**FROM THE SPEECH IN CLOSING THE CONFERENCE
MAY 28**

The current international situation is such that some sort of a temporary, unstable equilibrium, but equilibrium for all that, has been established; it is the kind of equilibrium under which the imperialist powers have been compelled to abandon their desire to hurl themselves at Soviet Russia, despite their hatred for her, because the disintegration of the capitalist world is steadily progressing, unity is steadily diminishing, while the onslaught of the forces of the oppressed colonies, which have a population of over a thousand million, is increasing from year to year, month to month, and even week to week. But we can make no conjectures on this score. We are now exercising our main influence on the international revolution through our economic policy. The working people of all countries without exception and without exaggeration are looking to the Soviet Russian Republic. This much has been achieved. The capitalists cannot hush up or conceal anything. That is why they so eagerly catch at our every economic mistake and weakness. The struggle in this field has now become global. Once we solve this problem, we shall have certainly and finally won on an international scale. That is why for us questions of economic development become of absolutely exceptional importance. On this front, we must achieve victory by a steady rise and progress which must be gradual and necessarily slow.

LETTER TO G. V. CHICHERIN AND L. B. KAMENEV¹²⁸

In view of the fact that the low-down American hucksters are trying to create the impression that we could be expected to cheat,

I propose that we should immediately telegraph them officially on behalf of the government, over the signatures of Kamenev and Chicherin (and if necessary Kalinin's and mine as well), the following:

We shall deposit with a New York bank an amount in gold constituting 120 per cent of what they will supply in the course of a month for one million starving children and sick persons, but our terms in that case are such that, considering such a complete material guarantee, the Americans must absolutely abstain not only from political but also from administrative interference, and must make no claims whatsoever, since this voids all the terms of the treaty giving them the least right to interfere even administratively. On the spot check-ups will be made by parity commissions (representing our government and them).

This proposal will show the hucksters just where they stand and subsequently disgrace them in the eyes of the whole world.

We should not forget that we have never had rationing of any kind in the countryside. If we are to make no mistake in this matter, I suggest we invite someone from the People's Commissariat for Food to discuss the matter.

August 13, 1921

Lenin

NOTE TO G. V. CHICHERIN¹²⁹

Comrade Chicherin,

I think we should wean them of these ways. Can it not be done in this way: answer formally in writing with reference to the "note". Then they will realise that we shall (soon) publicly ridicule them and *gifler** them for the unsigned notes.

Yours,

Lenin

Written not earlier than
September 16, 1921
First published in 1959
in *Lenin Miscellany XXXVI*

Published according to the
text of the *Miscellany*

* *Gifler* (French)—to box the ears.—Ed.

FOURTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION

(Extract)

Let the curs and swine of the moribund bourgeoisie and of the petty-bourgeois democrats who trail behind them heap imprecations, abuse and derision upon our heads for our reverses and mistakes in the work of building up *our* Soviet system. We do not forget for a moment that we have committed and are committing numerous mistakes and are suffering numerous reverses. How can reverses and mistakes be avoided in a matter so new in the history of the world as the building of an unprecedented *type* of state edifice! We shall work steadfastly to set our reverses and mistakes right and to improve our practical application of Soviet principles, which is still very, very far from being perfect. But we have a right to be and are proud that to us has fallen the good fortune to *begin* the building of a Soviet state, and thereby to *usher in* a new era in world history, the era of the rule of a *new* class, a class which is oppressed in every capitalist country, but which everywhere is marching forward towards a new life, towards victory over the bourgeoisie, towards the dictatorship of the proletariat, towards the emancipation of mankind from the yoke of capital and from imperialist wars.

The question of imperialist wars, of the international policy of finance capital which now dominates the whole world, a policy that must *inevitably* engender new imperialist wars, that must inevitably cause an extreme intensification of national oppression, pillage, brigandry and the

strangulation of weak, backward and small nationalities by a handful of "advanced" powers—that question has been the keystone of all policy in all the countries of the globe since 1914. It is a question of life and death for millions upon millions of people. It is a question of whether 20,000,000 people (as compared with the 10,000,000 who were killed in the war of 1914-18 and in the supplementary "minor" wars that are still going on) are to be slaughtered in the next imperialist war, which the bourgeoisie are preparing, and which is growing out of capitalism before our very eyes. It is a question of whether in that future war, which is inevitable (if capitalism continues to exist), 60,000,000 people are to be maimed (compared with the 30,000,000 maimed in 1914-18). In this question, too, our October Revolution marked the beginning of a new era in world history. The lackeys of the bourgeoisie and its yes-men—the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks, and the petty-bourgeois, allegedly "socialist", democrats all over the world—derided our slogan "convert the imperialist war into a civil war". But that slogan proved to be the *truth*—it was the only truth, unpleasant, blunt, naked and brutal, but nevertheless the *truth*, as against the host of most refined jingoist and pacifist lies. Those lies are being dispelled. The Brest peace has been exposed. And with every passing day the significance and consequences of a peace that is even worse than the Brest peace—the peace of Versailles—are being more relentlessly exposed. And the millions who are thinking about the causes of the recent war and of the approaching future war are more and more clearly realising the grim and inexorable truth that it is impossible to escape imperialist war, and imperialist peace (if the old orthography were still in use, I would have written the word *mir* in two ways, to give it both its meanings)* which inevitably engenders imperialist war, that it is impossible to escape that inferno, *except by a Bolshevik struggle and a Bolshevik revolution*.

Let the bourgeoisie and the pacifists, the generals and the petty bourgeoisie, the capitalists and the philistines, the

* In Russian, the word *mir* has two meanings (*world* and *peace*) and had two different spellings in the old orthography.—Ed.

pious Christians and the knights of the Second and the Two-and-a-Half Internationals vent their fury against that revolution. No torrents of abuse, calumnies and lies can enable them to conceal the historic fact that for the first time in hundreds and thousands of years the slaves have replied to a war between slave-owners by openly proclaiming the slogan "Convert this war between slave-owners for the division of their loot into a war of the slaves of all nations against the slave-owners of all nations."

For the first time in hundreds and thousands of years that slogan has grown from a vague and helpless waiting into a clear and definite political programme, into an effective struggle waged by millions of oppressed people under the leadership of the proletariat; it has grown into the first victory of the proletariat, the first victory in the struggle to abolish war and to unite the workers of all countries against the united bourgeoisie of different nations, against the bourgeoisie that makes peace and war at the expense of the slaves of capital, the wage-workers, the peasants, the working people.

This first victory is *not yet the final victory*, and it was achieved by our October Revolution at the price of incredible difficulties and hardships, at the price of unprecedented suffering, accompanied by a series of serious reverses and mistakes on our part. How could a single backward people be expected to frustrate the imperialist wars of the most powerful and most developed countries of the world without sustaining reverses and without committing mistakes! We are not afraid to admit our mistakes and shall examine them dispassionately in order to learn how to correct them. But the fact remains that for the first time in hundreds and thousands of years the promise "to reply" to war between the slave-owners by a revolution of the slaves directed *against* all the slave-owners *has been completely fulfilled*—and is being fulfilled despite all difficulties.

We have made the start. When, at what date and time, and the proletarians of which nation will complete this process is not important. The important thing is that the ice has been broken; the road is open, the way has been shown.

Gentlemen, capitalists of all countries, keep up your hypocritical pretence of "defending the fatherland"—the

Japanese fatherland against the American, the American against the Japanese, the French against the British, and so forth! Gentlemen, knights of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, pacifist petty bourgeoisie and philistines of the entire world, go on "evading" the question of how to combat imperialist wars by issuing new "Basle Manifestos" (on the model of the Basle Manifesto of 1912). *The first Bolshevik revolution* has wrested *the first hundred million people* of this earth from the clutches of imperialist war and the imperialist world. Subsequent revolutions will deliver the rest of mankind from such wars and from such a world.

Pravda No. 234,
October 18, 1921
Signed: *N. Lenin*

Collected Works, Vol. 33,
pp. 54-57

LETTER TO G. V. CHICHERIN

October 16 [1921]

Comrade Chicherin,

I do not agree with your appraisal of the situation and with the steps you propose to make. There can be no question of Trotsky and me leaving the Executive Committee of the Communist International.¹³⁰

With regard to the debts, it is enough to inform Krasin.

Urquhart differs *so far* on percentages; he offered five per cent of the gross output, our commission demanded ten per cent.

The British and French want to plunder us. We shall not allow it. We shall not pay any attention to their "discontent".

There is one concession—timber in the Caucasus. A commercial rapprochement with the Germans is on the way. With Italy things are starting to move; they offer us a loan *That* must be accelerated and pushed forward as much as possible.

We have an agreement on boilers with Armstrong. There is an agreement with Norway.

The "sharp turn" is *only* that of Britain and France, and, in my opinion, *no* concessions should be made to them, or steps taken. *Hoover* is a real advantage.

With Communist greetings,

Lenin

**LETTER TO THE POLITICAL BUREAU
RE THE RESOLUTION OF THE NINTH ALL-RUSSIA
CONGRESS OF SOVIETS ON THE INTERNATIONAL
SITUATION¹³¹**

I ask that the question be discussed as to whether the Congress of Soviets ought to adopt a special resolution against the adventurist policy of Poland, Finland and Rumania (for a number of reasons it is better to say nothing about Japan). In the resolution it must be comprehensively explained that no government of Russia (except the Soviet Government) has ever recognised or could recognise the criminal nature of the imperialist policy in respect of the outlying regions of the former Russian Empire pursued both by tsarism and by the Provisional Government, which had the backing of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries. The resolution should state in detail how much we have shown by deeds that we value both the self-determination of nations and peaceful relations with the states that were once part of the Russian Empire. Say in detail that we fully anticipate a peaceful attitude, not only on the part of the workers and peasants of all the countries mentioned, but also on the part of a huge section of the reasonable bourgeoisie and the governments. In respect of the adventurist elements, end up with a sharp threat to the effect that if the adventurist fooling with gangs similar to the former Savinkov gangs does not stop, and if they continue to interfere with our peaceful work, we shall arise in a people's war, and those who take part in adventures and banditism will be completely crushed.

Instruct Trotsky and Chicherin to draw up a draft resolution.

A Congress resolution with such a content would be convenient for mass distribution in all languages.

December 22, 1921

Lenin

Dictated by telephone
on December 22
First published (abridged) in
1945 in *Lenin Miscellany XXXV*
First published in full in 1950
in the Fourth Russian edition
of the *Collected Works*

Collected Works, Vol. 33,
p. 139

NINTH ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS OF SOVIETS

DECEMBER 23-28, 1921

THE HOME AND FOREIGN POLICY OF THE REPUBLIC

From the Report
of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee
and the Council of People's Commissars
December 23

(*Stormy applause. Cries of "Hurrah!", "Long live our leader, Comrade Lenin!", "Long live the leader of the world proletariat, Comrade Lenin!" Prolonged applause.*) Comrades, I have to make a report on the foreign and home situation of the Republic. This is the first time I am able to make such a report when a whole year has passed without any major attack being made against our Soviet power by Russian or foreign capitalists. This is the first year that we have been able to enjoy a relative respite from attacks, even if for a limited period, and have been able in some measure to apply our energies to our chief and fundamental tasks, namely, the rehabilitation of our war-ravaged economy, healing the wounds inflicted on Russia by the exploiting classes that had been in power, and laying the foundations for socialist construction.

First and foremost, in dealing with the question of the international position of our Republic, I must repeat what I have already said, namely, that a certain equilibrium, though a highly unstable one, has been created in international relations. This is now evident. It is very strange for those of us who have lived through the revolution from its inception, who have experienced and observed our incredible difficulties in breaching the imperialist fronts, to see how things have now developed. At that time probably none

of us expected or could have expected that things would shape out like this.

We imagined (and it is perhaps well worth remembering this now because it will help us in our practical conclusions on the main economic problems) that future development would take a more simple, a more direct form than the one it took. We told ourselves and we told the working class and all working people both of Russia and of other countries that there was no way out of the accursed, criminal imperialist slaughter except through revolution, and that by breaking off the imperialist war by revolution we were opening up the only possible way out of this criminal slaughter for all peoples. It seemed to us then, as it was bound to, that this was the obvious, direct and easiest path to take. This direct path, which, in fact, alone had enabled us to break free of imperialist ties, of imperialist crimes and of the imperialist war continuing to threaten the rest of the world, proved to be one which other nations were unable to take—at any rate not as quickly as we had thought they would. When, nevertheless, we now see what has taken place, when we see that there is only one Socialist Soviet Republic and that it is surrounded by a whole array of frenziedly hostile imperialist powers, we ask ourselves—how was it possible for this to happen?

One may reply without any exaggeration that this happened because our understanding of events was basically correct, our appraisal of the imperialist slaughter and the confusion in the relations between the imperialist powers was also basically correct. It is only due to this that such a strange situation, the unstable, inexplicable, and yet to a certain extent indisputable equilibrium that we witness, has arisen. The fact of the matter is that although completely surrounded by countries economically and militarily much more powerful than ourselves, whose open hostility to us quite often borders on frenzy, we nevertheless see that they were unable to destroy Soviet Russia directly and instantly—something on which they had been spending so much of their resources and their strength for three years. When we ask ourselves how this could have happened, how it could be that a state, undoubtedly one of the most backward and weakest, managed to repel the attacks of the

openly hostile, most powerful countries in the world, when we try to examine this question, we see clearly that it was because we proved to be correct on the most fundamental issues. Our forecasts and calculations proved to be correct. It turned out that although we did not receive the swift and direct support of the working people of the world that we had counted on, and which we had regarded as the basis of the whole of our policy, we did receive support of another kind, which was not direct or swift—the sympathy of the workers and peasants, the farm workers, throughout the world, even in the countries most hostile to us, the sympathy that was great enough to be the final and most decisive source, the decisive reason for the complete failure of all the attacks directed against us. This sympathy consolidated the alliance of the working people of all countries which we had proclaimed and which had been implemented within the borders of our Republic, and which had its effect on all countries. No matter how precarious this support may be, as long as capitalism exists in other countries (this we must of course see clearly and frankly acknowledge), we may say that it is something we can rely on. Because of this sympathy and support, the intervention, which we endured in the course of three years, which caused us incredible destruction and suffering, is, I will not say impossible—one has to be very cautious and circumspect here—but, at any rate, has been made far more difficult for our enemies to carry out. And this, in the final analysis, explains the situation now obtaining and which at first glance appears so strange and incomprehensible.

When we calmly weigh up the sympathy felt for Bolshevism and the socialist revolution, when we survey the international situation from the point of view of the balance of forces, irrespective of whether these forces favour a just or an unjust cause, whether they favour the exploiting class or the working people—we shall ignore this aspect and attempt an appraisal of the alignment of these forces on an international scale—then we shall see that they are grouped in a manner that basically confirms our predictions and calculations: that capitalism is disintegrating and that since the war, which ended first with the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and subsequently with the Treaty of Versailles—

and I don't know which is worse—hatred and loathing for the war increase as time passes even in the countries which emerged as victors. And the farther we get from the war the clearer it becomes, not only to the working people, but to an extremely large extent also to the bourgeoisie of the victor countries, that capitalism is disintegrating, that the world economic crisis has created an intolerable situation from which there is no escape, despite all the victories. That is why, while being immeasurably weaker economically, politically and militarily than all the other powers, we are at the same time stronger, because we are aware of and correctly assess all that emerges and must emerge from this imperialist confusion, from this bloody tangle and from those contradictions (to take only the currency contradictions, I will not mention the others) in which they have become entangled and are becoming entangled still more deeply and from which they see no way out.

Today we see how the representatives of the most moderate bourgeoisie, who are definitely and without doubt far removed from socialist ideas, to say nothing of "that awful Bolshevism", change their tune; this concerns even people like the famous writer Keynes, whose book has been translated into all languages, who took part in the Versailles negotiations, and who devoted himself heart and soul to helping the governments—even he, subsequently, has had to change his tune, to give it up, although he continues to curse socialism. I repeat, he does not mention, nor does he wish even to think about Bolshevism—but he tells the capitalist world: "What you are doing will lead you into a hopeless situation", and he even proposes something like the annulment of all debts.

That is excellent, gentlemen! You should have followed our example long ago.

Only a few days ago we read a short report in the newspapers to the effect that one of the most experienced, exceedingly skilful and astute leaders of a capitalist government, Lloyd George, is, it appears, beginning to propose a similar step; and that seemingly the U.S.A. wishes to reply by saying: "Sorry, but we want to be repaid in full." That being so, we say to ourselves that things are not going too well in these advanced and mighty states since they are dis-

cussing such a simple measure so many years after the war. This was one of the easiest things we did—it was nothing to some of the other difficulties we overcame. (*Applause.*) When we see the growing confusion on this question we say that we are not afraid of their propaganda; although we by no means forget either the dangers surrounding us or our economic and military weakness compared to any one of these states, who, jointly, quite openly and frequently express their hatred for us. Whenever we express somewhat different views as to whether the existence of land-owners and capitalists is justified they do not like it, and these views are declared to be criminal propaganda. I simply cannot understand this, for the same sort of propaganda is conducted legally in all states that do not share our economic views and opinions. Propaganda which calls Bolshevism monstrous, criminal, usurpatory—this monster defies description—this propaganda is conducted openly in all these countries. Recently I had a meeting with Christensen, who was a candidate for the U.S. Presidency on behalf of the farmers' and workers' party there. Do not be misled by this name, comrades. It does not in the least resemble the workers' and peasants' party in Russia. It is a purely bourgeois party, openly and resolutely hostile to any kind of socialism, and is recognised as being perfectly respectable by all bourgeois parties. This Danish-born American, who received almost a million votes at the presidential elections (and this, after all, is something in the United States), told me how in Denmark, when he tried to say among people "dressed like I am", and he was well dressed, like a bourgeois, that the Bolsheviks were not criminals, "they nearly killed me". They told him that the Bolsheviks were monsters, usurpers, and that they were surprised that anyone could mention such people in decent society. This is the type of propaganda atmosphere surrounding us.

We see, nevertheless, that a certain equilibrium has been created. This is the objective political situation, quite independent of our victories, which proves that we have fathomed the depth of the contradictions connected with the imperialist war, and that we are gauging them more correctly than ever before and more correctly than other powers, who, despite all their victories, despite all their

strength, have not yet found a way out, nor see any. That is the substance of the international situation which accounts for what we now see. We have before us a highly unstable equilibrium but one that is, nevertheless, certain, obvious, indisputable. I do not know whether this is for long, and I do not think that anyone can know. That is why, for our part, we must display the utmost caution. And the first precept of our policy, the first lesson that emerges from our governmental activities for the past year, the lesson which must be learned by all workers and peasants, is to be on the alert, to remember that we are surrounded by people, classes, governments who openly express the utmost hatred for us. We must remember that we are always a hair's breadth away from invasion. We shall do all in our power to prevent this misfortune. It is doubtful that any nation has experienced such a burden of the imperialist war as we have. Then we bore the burden of the Civil War forced on us by the ruling classes, who fought for the Russia of the émigrés, the Russia of the landowners, the Russia of the capitalists. We know, we know only too well, the incredible misfortunes that war brings to the workers and peasants. For that reason our attitude to this question must be most cautious and circumspect. We are ready to make the greatest concessions and sacrifices in order to preserve the peace for which we have paid such a high price. We are ready to make huge concessions and sacrifices, but not any kind and not for ever. Let those, fortunately not numerous, representatives of the war parties and aggressive cliques of Finland, Poland and Rumania who make great play of this—let them mark it well. (*Applause.*)

Anyone who has any political sense or acumen will say that there has not been—nor can there be—a government in Russia other than the Soviet Government prepared to make such concessions and sacrifices in relation to nationalities within our state, and also to those which had joined the Russian Empire. There is not, and cannot be, another government which would recognise as clearly as we do and declare so distinctly to one and all that the attitude of old Russia (tsarist Russia, Russia of the war parties) to the nationalities populating Russia was criminal, that this attitude was impermissible, that it aroused the rightful and

indignant protest and discontent of the oppressed nationalities. There is not, and cannot be, another government which would so openly admit this, which would conduct this anti-chauvinist propaganda, a propaganda that recognises the guilt of old Russia, tsarist Russia, Kerensky Russia—a government which would conduct propaganda against the forcible incorporation of other nationalities into Russia. This is not mere words—this is an obvious political fact, absolutely indisputable and plain for all to see. As long as no nationalities engage in intrigues against us which bind them to the imperialist oppression, as long as they do not help to crush us, we shall not be deterred by formalities. We shall not forget that we are revolutionaries. (*Applause.*) But there are facts incontrovertibly and indisputably showing that in Russia, that has defeated the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, the smallest, completely unarmed nationality, however weak it may be, may and must absolutely rest assured that we have nothing but peaceful intentions towards it, that our propaganda about the criminality of the old policy of the old governments is not weakening and that we are as firm as ever in our desire at all costs, and at the price of enormous sacrifices and concessions, to maintain peace with all nationalities that belonged to the former Russian Empire, but who did not wish to remain with us. We have proved this. And we shall prove this no matter how great the curses rained on us from all sides. It seems to us that we have given excellent proof of it, and we declare to the meeting of representatives of the workers and peasants of Russia, to the many millions of workers and peasants, that we shall do our utmost to preserve peace in the future, that we shall not shrink from great sacrifices and concessions in order to safeguard this peace.

There are, however, limits beyond which one cannot go. We shall not permit peace treaties to be flouted. We shall not permit attempts to interfere with our peaceful work. On no account shall we permit this, and we shall rise to a man to defend our existence. (*Applause.*)

Comrades, what I have just said is perfectly clear and comprehensible to you, and you could not expect anything else from anyone reporting to you on our policy. You know

that such, and no other, is our policy. But, unfortunately, there are now two worlds: the old world of capitalism, that is in a state of confusion but which will never surrender voluntarily, and the rising new world, which is still very weak, but which will grow, for it is invincible. This old world has its old diplomacy, which cannot believe that it is possible to speak frankly and forthrightly. This old diplomacy thinks there must be a trap of some sort here. (*Applause, laughter.*) When this economically and militarily all-powerful old world sent us—that was some time ago—Bullitt, a representative of the United States Government, who came to us with the proposal that we should conclude peace with Kolchak and Denikin on terms that were most unfavourable to us—we said that we held so dear the blood of the workers and peasants shed for so long in Russia that although the terms were extremely unfavourable we were prepared to accept them, because we were convinced that the forces of Kolchak and Denikin would disintegrate from within. We said this quite frankly, with the minimum of diplomatic subtlety, and so they concluded that we must be trying to dupe them. And Bullitt, who had held these friendly, round-table conversations with us, was met with reproach and compelled to resign as soon as he got home. I am surprised that he has not yet been thrown into gaol, in keeping with the imperialist custom, for secretly sympathising with the Bolsheviks. (*Laughter, applause.*) But the upshot was that we, who at that time had proposed peace to our disadvantage, obtained peace on much more favourable terms. That was something of a lesson. I know that we can no more learn the old diplomacy than we can remould ourselves; but the lessons in diplomacy that we have given since then and that have been learned by the other powers must have had some effect; they must have remained in the memory of some people. (*Laughter.*) Hence, our straightforward statement that our workers and peasants prized above all the blessings of peace, but that there were limits to the concessions they were prepared to make to preserve it, was taken to mean that they had not for a moment, not for a second, forgotten the hardships they had suffered in the imperialist war and the Civil War. This reminder, which I am sure this Congress, and the

whole mass of workers and peasants, all Russia, will endorse and express—this reminder will surely have some effect and play a certain role, no matter how the powers take it, no matter what diplomatic ruse their old diplomatic habits make them suspect.

This, comrades, is what I think must be said about our international situation. A certain unstable equilibrium has been reached. Materially—economically and militarily—we are extremely weak; but morally—by which, of course, I mean not abstract morals, but the alignment of the real forces of all classes in all countries—we are the strongest of all. This has been proved in practice; it has been proved not merely by words but by deeds; it has been proved once and, if history takes a certain turn, it will, perhaps, be proved many times again. That is why we say that having started on our work of peaceful development we shall exert every effort to continue it without interruption. At the same time, comrades, be vigilant, safeguard the defence potential of our country, strengthen our Red Army to the utmost, and remember that we have no right to permit an instant's slackening where our workers and peasants and their gains are concerned. (*Applause.*)

Comrades, having thus briefly outlined the most essential features of our international position, I shall now deal with the manner in which economic relations are beginning to shape out in our country and in Western Europe, in the capitalist countries. The greatest difficulty here is that without definite relations between us and the capitalist countries we cannot have stable economic relations. Events very clearly show that neither can the capitalist countries have them. But today we are not in an altruistic mood. We are thinking more of how to continue in existence when other powers are hostile to us.

But is the existence of a socialist republic in a capitalist environment at all conceivable? It seemed inconceivable from the political and military aspects. That it is possible both politically and militarily has now been proved; it is a fact. But what about trade? What about economic relations? Contacts, assistance, the exchange of services between backward, ruined agricultural Russia and the advanced, industrially-developed group of capitalist countries—is all

this possible? Did they not threaten to surround us with a barbed wire fence so as to prevent any economic relations with us whatever? "War did not scare them, so we shall reduce them by means of a blockade."

Comrades, during the past four years we have heard so many threats, and such terrible ones, that none of them can frighten us any more. As for the blockade, experience has shown that it is an open question as to who suffers from it most, the blockaded or the blockaders. Experience has shown beyond doubt that during this first year, on which I am able to report as a period of a relatively elementary respite from direct brute force, we have not been recognised, we have been rejected, and relations with us have been declared non-existent (let them be recognised as non-existent by the bourgeois courts), but they nevertheless exist. I deem it my right to report to you that this is, without the slightest exaggeration, one of the main results achieved in 1921, the year under review.

I do not know whether the report of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs to the Ninth Congress of Soviets has been, or will be, distributed to you today. In my opinion, the defect in this report is that it is too bulky and is difficult to read right through. But, perhaps, this is my own failing, and I have no doubt that the overwhelming majority of you, as well as all those who are interested in politics, will read it, even if not immediately. Even if you do not read it all, but only glance through its pages, you will see that Russia has sprouted, if one may so express it, a number of fairly regular and permanent commercial relations, missions, treaties, etc. True, we are not yet recognised *de jure*. This is still important, because the danger of the unstable equilibrium being upset, the danger of new attempts at invasion has, as I have said, increased; the relations, however, are a fact.

In 1921—the first year of trade with foreign countries—we made considerable progress. This was partly due to the improvement in our transport system, perhaps the most important, or one of the most important sectors of our economy. It is due also to our imports and exports. Permit me to quote very brief figures. All our difficulties, our most incredible difficulties—the burden of these difficulties, the

most crucial feature of them—lie in fuel and food, in the peasant economy, in the famine and calamities that have afflicted us. We know very well that all this is bound up with the transport problem. We must discuss this, and all comrades from the localities must know and repeat it over and over again to all their comrades there that we must strain every nerve to overcome the food and fuel crisis. It is from this that our transport system suffers, and transport is the material instrument of our relations with foreign countries.

The organisational improvements in our transport system over the past year are beyond doubt. In 1921 we transported by river much more than in 1920. The average run per vessel in 1921 was 1,000 pood-versts as compared with 800 pood-versts in 1920. We have definitely made some progress in organisation. I must say that for the first time we are beginning to obtain assistance from abroad. We have ordered thousands of locomotives, and we have already received the first thirteen from Sweden and thirty-seven from Germany. It is a very small beginning, but a beginning, nevertheless. We have ordered hundreds of tank cars, about 500 of which arrived here in the course of 1921. We are paying a high, an exorbitant price for these things, but still it shows that we are receiving the assistance of the large-scale industry of the advanced countries; it shows that the large-scale industry of the capitalist countries is helping us to restore our economy, although all these countries are governed by capitalists who hate us heart and soul. All of these capitalists are united by governments which continue to make statements in their press about how matters stand with the *de jure* recognition of Soviet Russia, and about whether or not the Bolshevik Government is a legitimate one. Lengthy research revealed that it is a legitimate government, but it cannot be recognised. I have no right to conceal the sad truth that we are not yet recognised, but I must tell you that commercial relations are nevertheless developing.

All these capitalist countries are in a position to make us pay through the nose; we pay more for the goods than they are worth; but for all that, they are helping our economy. How did that happen? Why are they acting against their

own inclinations and in contradiction to what they are constantly asserting in their press? And this press is more than a match for ours in respect of circulation, and the force and venom with which it attacks us. They call us criminals, and all the same they help us. And so it turns out they are bound up with us economically. It turns out as I have already said, that our calculations, made on a grand scale, are more correct than theirs. This is not because they lack people capable of making correct calculations—they have far more than we have—but because it is impossible to calculate properly when one is heading for destruction. That is why I would like to supplement my remarks with a few figures to show how our foreign trade is developing. I shall quote only very brief figures that are easy to remember. In three years—1918, 1919 and 1920—our total imports amounted to a little over 17,000,000 poods; in 1921 they amounted to 50,000,000 poods, that is to say, three times the total amount imported in the three preceding years. Our exports in the first three years totalled 2,500,000 poods; in 1921 alone, they amounted to 11,500,000 poods. These figures are infinitesimally, miserably, ridiculously small; any well-informed person will at once say that they are indicative of poverty. And that is what they do indicate. But for all that, it is a beginning. And we, who have experienced direct attempts to crush us, who for years have been hearing threats that everything will be done to prevent any relations with us as long as we remain what we are, nevertheless see that something has proved more potent than these threats. We see that their forecast of economic development was wrong and ours was right. We have made a start, and we must now exert all our efforts to continue this development without interruption. We must make it our primary concern, giving it all our attention.

I shall give you another little illustration of the progress we made in 1921. In the first quarter of 1921 imports amounted to about 3,000,000 poods, in the second quarter to 8,000,000 poods, in the third quarter to 24,000,000 poods. So we are making progress. These figures are infinitesimally small, but they nevertheless show a gradual increase. We see how they grew in 1921, which was a year of unprece-

dented difficulties. You know what that calamity, the famine, cost us, what incredible difficulties it is still causing on the farms, in industry and in our life generally. But although our country has been devastated by war, has suffered tremendous hardship as a result of all the wars and of the rule of tsars and capitalists, we are now on the road that offers us a prospect of improvement, in spite of the unceasing hostility towards us. That is the main factor. That is why, when we read recently about the Washington Conference,¹³² when we heard the news that the countries hostile to us would be obliged to convene a second conference next summer and to invite Germany and Russia to discuss the terms of a genuine peace, we said that our terms are clear and definite; we have formulated them, we have published them. How much hostility shall we encounter? We have no illusions about that; but we know that the economic position of those who blockaded us has proved to be vulnerable. There is a force more powerful than the wishes, the will and the decisions of any of the governments or classes that are hostile to us. That force is world general economic relations, which compel them to make contact with us. The farther they proceed in this direction the more extensive and rapid will be the development of what in today's report for 1921 I have been able to indicate to you only by some scanty figures.

... You are fully aware, comrades, of the incredible hardships of the 1921 famine. It was inevitable that the misfortunes of old Russia should have been carried over to our times, because the only way to avoid them is to restore the economy, but not on the old, paltry, petty basis. It must be rehabilitated on a new basis, the basis of large-scale industry and electrification. Only in that way shall we be rid of our poverty and of interminable famines. It can be seen at once that the periods by which we were able to measure our political and military victories do not apply here. Surrounded by hostile countries, we have, nevertheless, pierced the blockade: no matter how meagre the help, we did get something. In all, it amounts to 2,500,000 poods. That is all the help that we have received from abroad, that the foreign countries graciously presented to starving Russia. We were able to collect about 600,000 gold rubles in

donations. It is a far too pitiful sum, and shows the mercenary attitude of the European bourgeoisie toward our famine. No doubt you have all read how, at the news of the famine, influential statesmen grandiloquently and solemnly declared that to take advantage of the famine in order to raise the question of old debts would be a devilish thing to do. I am not so sure that the devil is worse than modern imperialism. What I do know is that in actual fact, despite the famine, they did try to recover their old debts on particularly harsh conditions. We do not refuse to pay, and solemnly declare that we are prepared to discuss things in a business-like fashion. But you all understand, and there can be no doubt about this, that we shall never under any circumstances allow ourselves to be tied hand and foot in this matter without considering all its aspects, without taking into account reciprocal claims, without a business-like discussion.

I have to inform you that during recent days we have had considerable success in the struggle against the famine. You have no doubt read in the newspapers that the U.S.A. has allocated 20 million dollars for the relief of the starving in Russia, probably on the same conditions as A.R.A.—the American Relief Administration. Krasin sent us a telegram a few days ago saying that the U.S. Government is formally proposing to guarantee the dispatch to us over a period of three months of foodstuffs and seeds worth 20 million dollars, provided we, on our part, can agree to the expenditure of 10 million dollars (20 million gold rubles) for the same purpose. We immediately agreed to this and have telegraphed accordingly. And I think we may say that, during the first three months, we shall be able to supply the starving with seed and food worth 30 million dollars, that is, 60 million gold rubles. This is, of course, very little; it by no means covers the terrible losses we have suffered. You all understand this perfectly well. But at any rate this is aid which will undoubtedly help to relieve our desperate need and desperate famine. And since in autumn we were able to achieve certain successes in providing the starving areas with seed and in extending the sown areas in general, we now have hopes for far greater success in the spring.

BRITISH LABOUR PARTY POLICY¹³³

**(To Comrade Chicherin, a Copy to Comrade Radek
and All Members of the Political Bureau)**

The telegram about the British Labour Party shows how extraordinarily naïve Krasin is. As I see it, measures of two kinds should now be taken: 1) a series of articles signed by various people and ridiculing the views of so-called European democracy on the Georgian problem should be published in the press; 2) some caustic journalist should be immediately commissioned to draft for Chicherin a super-polite Note in reply to the British Labour Party. In this Note he should make it perfectly plain that the proposal that we withdraw our troops from Georgia and hold a referendum there would be quite reasonable and might be recognised as coming from people who have not gone out of their minds, and have not been bribed by the Entente, if it extended to all nations of the globe; specifically, in order to set the British Labour Party leaders thinking about the meaning of present-day imperialist relations in international politics, we suggest, in particular, that that party give favourable consideration to the following: first, that British troops be withdrawn from Ireland and that a referendum be held there; second, the same with regard to India; third, the same with regard to the withdrawal of Japanese troops from Korea; fourth, the same with regard to all countries in which there are troops of any of the big imperialist states. The Note should express, in superbly polite terms, the idea that people desirous of giving thought to these proposals of ours and to the system of imperialist relations in international politics may prove capable of

understanding the "interesting" nature of the proposals made by us to the British Labour Party. On the whole, the draft Note, couched in super-polite and extremely popular terms (to suit the intelligence of ten-year-olds), should deride the idiotic leaders of the British Labour Party.

I propose that the Political Bureau consider whether it ought to send a copy of this letter to Krasin. I personally am in favour.

December 27, 1921

Lenin

Dictated by telephone
on December 27, 1921
First published in *Pravda* No. 21,
January 21, 1930

Collected Works, Vol. 33,
pp. 182-83

LETTER TO G. V. CHICHERIN

February 15, 1922

Comrade Chicherin,

A telegram from Krasin dated February 13 [File No. 1466/c] says (Lloyd George): "If the Soviet Government refuses to recognise the Cannes resolutions¹³⁴ that will threaten the break-down of the entire conference and will, in any case, make it easier for Poincaré to walk out...."

This is formulated more "threateningly" than accurately!

But the whole British press, judging by our papers, has made frequent statements to the effect that the invitation to the Cannes* Conference *does not require and never has required the preliminary acceptance* of the Cannes terms and that the contrary opinion held by the French is an incorrect one.

All the material must be collected to establish *precise* and *formally* indisputable facts.

It seems to me that three facts are indisputable:

(1) when we were invited it was *not* required that we make a precise, clear and formal declaration of the *acceptance* of the Cannes terms;

(2) we did *not* make any such declaration in our reply, and we have *not been informed* that our reply is *incomplete*;

(3) *the entire* British press in its dispute with the French *recognised* that the preliminary acceptance of the Cannes terms is not obligatory.

With Communist greetings,

Lenin

THE INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC SITUATION OF THE SOVIET REPUBLIC

From a Speech Delivered to a Meeting of the Communist
Group at the All-Russia Congress of Metalworkers,
March 6, 1922¹³⁵

Of course, comrades, you all know that Genoa¹³⁶ remains in the forefront of the problems of our international politics. I am not very sure that it does so legitimately, for when we say "Genoa" we mean the Conference that everybody long ago heard about, the Conference that was to have taken place in Genoa, Italy. The preparations for it had been almost completed; but now, unfortunately, the situation is so indefinite that nobody knows (and I am afraid that even the initiators and organisers themselves do not know) whether there is much chance of its taking place or not. At all events, we must say to ourselves, and to all those who have any interest in the destiny of the workers' and peasants' republic, that our position on this question, that is, on the question of the Genoa Conference, has been absolutely firm from the very beginning, and remains so. It is not our fault if certain people lack not only firmness but even the most elementary determination, the most elementary ability to carry out their own plans. From the very beginning we declared that *we welcomed Genoa and would attend it*. We understood perfectly well and did not in the least conceal the fact that we were going there as merchants, because trade with capitalist countries (as long as they have not entirely collapsed) is absolutely essential to us; we realised that we were going to Genoa

to bargain for the most proper and most advantageous and politically suitable terms for this trade, and nothing more. This is by no means a secret to those capitalist countries whose governments drew up the first plan for the Genoa Conference and got it going. Those countries know perfectly well that the list of commercial agreements linking us with different capitalist states is growing longer and longer, that the number of practical transactions is increasing, and that we are now discussing in the greatest detail a huge number of joint Russian and foreign commercial projects between the most diverse combinations of foreign countries and various branches of our industry. Thus, the capitalist states are well aware of the practical basis of what is mainly to be discussed at Genoa. And this basis has a superstructure consisting of all sorts of political talk, assumptions and projects, but we must realise that it is only a little one, largely artificial, designed and erected by those who are interested in it.

It goes without saying that during the more than four years' existence of Soviet power we have acquired sufficient practical experience (apart from the fact that we are already quite familiar with it in theory) to enable us to appraise correctly the diplomatic game the gentlemen who represent the bourgeois countries are today playing according to all the rules of the obsolete art of bourgeois diplomacy. We know perfectly well what lies at the bottom of this game; we know that it is trade. *The bourgeois countries must trade with Russia*; they know that unless they establish some form of economic relations their disintegration will continue in the way it has proceeded up to now. Notwithstanding all their magnificent victories, notwithstanding the endless boasting with which they fill the newspapers and telegraph services of the whole world, their economy is falling to pieces. And after more than three years of effort, after their great victories, they cannot cope with the very simple task of restoring the old, let alone building anything new, and are still racking their brains over the problem of how to get together and form some combination of three, four, or five (the number is so large, you see, that it is frightfully difficult to reach an agreement) so as to be able to trade.

I can understand that Communists need time to learn to trade, and I know that those who are learning will be making the crudest of mistakes for several years; but history will forgive them because they are entirely new to the business. For this purpose we must make our thinking more flexible, and must discard all communist, or rather Russian, Oblomovism, and much more besides. But it is strange for representatives of bourgeois countries to have to learn the trading business all over again, after they have been engaged in it for hundreds of years, and when the whole of their social life is based upon it. Incidentally, it should not seem so strange to us. For a long time we have been saying, and we always knew, that their appraisal of the imperialist war was less correct than ours. They appraised it from what they could see directly in front of them, and three years after their tremendous victories they still cannot find a way out of the situation.

We Communists said that our appraisal of the war was more profound and correct; that its contradictions and its disasters would have a far broader impact than the capitalist countries imagined. And, looking at the bourgeois victor countries from outside, we said: they will recall our forecast and our appraisal of the war and its consequences more than once. The fact that they do not understand the simplest things does not surprise us. But we nevertheless say, "We must trade with the capitalist countries as long as they exist." We shall negotiate with them as merchants; and the fact we can do so is proved by the increasing number of trade agreements we are signing and negotiating with them. But we cannot publish them until they are signed. From the commercial point of view we, of course, have to agree when a capitalist merchant comes to us and says, "This deal must remain between ourselves until the negotiations are completed." We, however, know how many agreements are in course of preparation—the list alone fills several pages, and it includes scores of practical proposals that have been discussed in detail with important financial groups. Of course, the gentlemen representing the bourgeois countries gathering at Genoa are as well aware of this as we are; whatever the position may be as regards other matters, contacts between these governments and their

capitalist firms have, of course, been maintained. Even they are not so terribly lax as not to know of this.

Since in foreign telegrams we are continually reading statements which create the impression that they do not know exactly what will take place at Genoa, that they have something new up their sleeve, that they want to astonish the world by submitting new terms to Russia, permit me to say to them (and I hope I shall have the opportunity of saying it to Lloyd George personally, at Genoa): "You will not surprise anyone by this, gentlemen. You are businessmen, and you know your job well. We are only just learning to trade and are still clumsy at it. But we have tens and hundreds of agreements and draft agreements, which show how we trade and what transactions we conduct or shall conduct, and on what terms." And we smile quietly to ourselves when we read in the newspapers all sorts of reports—published for the purpose of scaring someone—to the effect that they intend to put us to some sort of test. We have been threatened often enough, and with much more serious threats than those uttered by the merchant who intends to slam the door after making his last offer. We have been threatened with the guns of the Allied powers that rule almost the whole world. *We were not frightened by those threats. Please, gentlemen, European diplomats, do not forget that.*

We are not in the least concerned about maintaining our diplomatic prestige, the good name to which the bourgeois states attach so much importance. Officially, we shall not even talk about it. But we have not forgotten it. Not one of our workers, not one of our peasants has forgotten, can forget, or ever will forget that he fought in defence of the workers' and peasants' government against the alliance of all those very powerful states that supported the intervention. We have a whole collection of treaties which those countries concluded with Kolchak and Denikin over a number of years. They have been published; we are familiar with them and the whole world is familiar with them. What is the use of playing hide-and-seek and pretending that we have all become Simple Simons? Every peasant and every worker knows that he fought against those countries, and that they failed to vanquish him. And

if you gentlemen, who represent the bourgeois governments, care to amuse yourselves, to waste your paper (of which you have ever so much more than you need) and your ink, and to overload your cables and radio stations with messages announcing to the whole world: "We shall put Russia to the test", we shall see who comes off best. We have already been put to the test, not the test of words, not the test of trade, not the test of money, but the test of the bludgeon. And in view of the severe, bleeding and painful wounds inflicted on us, we have earned that it be said of us—not by ourselves, but by our enemies—"A man who has been beaten is worth two who have not."

We have earned this on the field of battle. As far as trade is concerned, it is a pity that we Communists are not being thrashed enough, but I trust that this defect will be made good in the near future with equal success.

I said that I hope to discuss these subjects with Lloyd George personally, in Genoa, and to tell him that *it is no use trying to frighten us with such trivialities* because it will only damage the prestige of those who try it. I hope that I shall not be prevented from doing this by ill health, which during the past few months has prevented me from taking a direct part in political affairs, and which totally incapacitates me for the Soviet duties which I have been appointed to perform. I have reason to believe that I shall be able to return to my duties within a few weeks. *But will three or four of them succeed within the next few weeks in reaching an agreement on what they have informed the world they are already agreed, upon? I am not sure about that.* I even dare assert that nobody in the world is sure about it, and what is more, that they themselves are not sure, because when these victorious powers, which rule the whole world, gathered at Cannes after numerous preliminary conferences—the number of these conferences is infinite, and even the European bourgeois press is jeering—they could not say definitely what they wanted.

From the point of view of practical tasks and not that of a diplomatic game, therefore, Comrade Trotsky has defined the position more correctly than anybody else. The day after the news was received that all the arrange-

ments for Genoa had been made, that everything had been settled, the complete agreement had been reached about Genoa and that it was only the instability of one of the bourgeois governments (they seem to have become suspiciously unstable these days) that necessitated the temporary postponement of the Conference, he issued the following order: "Let every man of the Red Army get a clear understanding of the international situation. We know definitely that there is a permanent group over there who want to try their hand at intervention. We shall be on the alert. Let every man of the Red Army know all about the diplomatic game and what is meant by force of arms, which, up to now, has decided all class conflicts."

Let every man of the Red Army know all about this game and what is meant by force of arms, and then we shall see what happens. No matter how shaky capitalism may have become in all capitalist countries, many quite influential parties may still try their hand at this game. And if the governments are so unstable that they cannot convene a conference at the date set for it, who knows whose hands they will fall into? We know that in those countries there are influential parties and influential persons and business magnates who want war. We are perfectly well aware of this, and we are well informed of what really lies at the bottom of economic treaties. We have endured exceptional hardship, and we know what misfortune and suffering a fresh attempt at war must entail for us. But we say we *shall be able to stand it again—just try and do it!* When Comrade Trotsky issued his definite order instead of publishing opinions about the diplomatic game, he had drawn the conclusion that we must again explain the international situation to every man of the Red Army, and tell him that the postponement of the Genoa Conference, owing to the instability of the Italian Cabinet, is a danger signal of war. *We shall see to it that every man of the Red Army understands this.* It will be easy for us to do this because there is hardly a family, hardly a man of the Red Army in Russia who does not know this, not only from newspapers, circulars and orders, but from his own village, where he has seen cripples, and knows families that have gone through this war, where he sees crop failures,

appalling hunger and ruin, hellish poverty, and knows what causes them—even though he does not read the Paris publications of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries which attribute all this to the malignant nature of the Bolsheviks. There can scarcely be a desire so deeply ingrained in him as the desire to repel (to say the least) those who forced upon us the war waged by Kolchak and Denikin and supported it. There is no need for us to appoint new agitation and propaganda commissions for this purpose.

In respect of the Genoa Conference we must distinguish exactly between its real nature and the newspaper canards circulated by the bourgeoisie. They think that these canards are frightful bombs, but they do not frighten us, because we have seen so many of them; and sometimes they do not deserve answering even with a smile. Every attempt to impose terms upon us as if we were vanquished is so very foolish that it is not worthy of a reply. We are establishing relations as merchants; we know what you owe us and what we owe you; and we know what your legitimate profit and even your super-profit may be. We get many proposals, and the number of agreements we are concluding is growing and will continue to grow, no matter how three or four of the victor powers combine. You will lose by this postponement of the Conference, because you will show your own people that you do not know what you want, and that the disease you are suffering from is lack of will power, and a failure to understand economics and politics, which we have appraised more profoundly than you. It will soon be ten years since we made this appraisal, and all the ruin and disorder that has occurred since then is still not understood by the bourgeois countries.

We already see clearly the position that has taken shape in our country, and we can say with full conviction that *we can now stop the retreat we began, we are already stopping it. Enough!* We clearly realise that the New Economic Policy is a retreat, and we do not conceal it. We grasped more than we could hold, but such is the logic of the struggle. Those of you who remember what the position was in October 1917, or those of you who

were politically immature at the time and have learned since what the position was in 1917, know what a large number of compromise proposals we Bolsheviks made to the bourgeoisie at that time. "Gentlemen, your affairs are in a bad way," we said, "we shall be in power, however, and will remain in power. Wouldn't you like to consider how you could settle things without a rumpus, as the muzhik would say?" We know that there was not only a rumpus, but attempts at rebellion, which the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries instigated and supported. Formerly they said: "We are prepared to surrender power to the Soviets right now." A few days ago I read an article by Kerensky, who opposed Chernov in a Paris journal (there's lots of that stuff there). "Did we cling to power?" asked Kerensky. "Even at the time of the Democratic Conference I said that if anyone could be found to form a homogeneous government, power would be transferred to the new government without the slightest upheaval."

We have never refused to take power alone. We said that as early as June 1917,¹³⁷ and took power at the Congress of Soviets in October 1917. We Bolsheviks obtained a majority at that Congress of Soviets. Then Kerensky appealed to the officer cadets, rushed off to Krasnov and wanted to muster an army to march on Petrograd. We knocked them about a bit, and now they say in an offended tone, "You are insolent, you are usurpers, butchers!" And we say in reply, "You have only yourselves to blame, friends! Do not imagine that the Russian peasants and workers have forgotten what you did. In October you challenged us to the most desperate fight, and we retaliated with terror and redoubled terror; and we shall adopt terror again if necessary, if you try it again." Not a single worker, not a single peasant doubts the need for it. No one doubts it but whimpering intellectuals.

Under conditions of unheard-of economic hardship we were compelled to wage war against an enemy whose forces were a hundred times superior to ours. It goes without saying that under these circumstances we were obliged to go to greater lengths in our urgent communist measures

than would otherwise have been the case; we were forced to do it. Our enemies thought they could finish us off; they thought they could bring us to our knees, not in words, but in deeds. They said they would not make any concessions. We replied that if they thought we dare not resort to the most extreme communist measures they were mistaken. And we did dare; we did it, and we won. Now we say we cannot hold these positions, we are retreating, because we have won enough to be able to hold essential positions. All the whiteguards, headed by the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, wax jubilant and say, "Aha, you are retreating!" We say, "Rejoice, since it puts you in good humour." We stand to gain if our enemy pats himself on the back instead of engaging in practical work. Rejoice, you are only putting us in a more favourable position by deceiving yourselves with illusions. We have captured vast positions, and had we not captured them in the period from 1917 to 1921 we would have had no room to retreat, geographically, economically or politically. We are maintaining power in alliance with the peasantry, and if you reject terms offered you before a war, you get worse terms after the war. This is definitely recorded in the diplomatic, economic and political history of the period 1917-21, so that we are not boasting at all. It is a plain statement of fact, a simple reminder. Had the capitalist gentlemen accepted the proposals we made to them in October 1917, they would have had five times as much as they have now. You fought for three years. What have you gained by it? Do you want to fight again? We know perfectly well that by no means all of you want to fight. On the other hand, we know that in view of the desperate famine and the present state of industry, we cannot hold all the positions we won in the period 1917-21. We have surrendered a number of them. But we can now say that, *so far as making concessions to the capitalists is concerned, the retreat is at an end.* We have weighed up our own forces and those of the capitalists. We have done some reconnoitring by way of concluding agreements with Russian and foreign capitalists, and we say—and I hope, I am sure, that the Party Congress will say the same, officially, on behalf of the ruling party of Russia—"We

can now stop our economic retreat. Enough! We shall not retreat any further; we shall set about deploying and regrouping our forces properly."

When I say that we are halting our economic retreat I do not want to suggest that I have for a moment forgotten the hellishly difficult conditions in which we find ourselves; nor do I want to soothe or console you on that score. The question of the limits of the retreat, and of whether we are stopping the retreat or not, is not one of the difficulties that confront us. We are aware of these difficulties. We know what famine in a peasant country like Russia means. We know that we have not yet succeeded in alleviating the sufferings caused by the famine. We know what a financial crisis means in a country which is compelled to trade and where paper currency has been issued on a scale such as the world has never seen before. We are well aware of these difficulties and fully appreciate their immensity. I am not afraid to say that they are tremendous. This does not frighten us in the least. On the contrary, we gain strength from saying openly to the workers and peasants that these are the difficulties that confront us; this is the danger with which the Western powers threaten us. Let us work and weigh up our tasks soberly. The fact that we are stopping our retreat does not mean that we are not aware of the dangers. We look them straight in the face. "This," we say, "is where the main danger lies; we must alleviate the sufferings caused by the famine. We have not done so yet. We have not yet overcome the financial crisis." Hence, you must not interpret what I say about halting the retreat to mean that we think that we have already laid the foundation (of our new economy) and that we can now calmly advance. No, the foundation has not yet been laid. We still cannot look calmly to the future. We are surrounded by threats of war, about which I have said enough, and by still greater internal dangers, economic dangers within the country; these are the frightful state of ruin of the peasantry, the famine, and our disrupted finances. These dangers are very great. They call for tremendous effort on our part. But if we are forced to go to war, we shall be able to fight. It will not be easy for them to fight, either. It was easy for

them to start war in 1918 and as easy to continue it in 1919. But much water, and blood, and many other things have flowed under the bridge since then. The Western workers and peasants have changed since 1919. And it is impossible to fool them by saying, "We are fighting the Germans; the Bolsheviks are nothing more than German agents." We do not become panic-stricken over our economic situation. Today we have scores of agreements concluded with Russian and foreign capitalists. We know what difficulties lay and still lie before us. We know why the Russian capitalists consented to conclude these agreements. We know on what terms these agreements were concluded. The majority of the capitalists concluded the agreements as practical men, as merchants. We, too, are acting as merchants. But every merchant takes some account of politics. If he is a merchant from a not altogether barbarous country, he will not enter into transactions with a government unless it shows considerable signs of stability, unless it is very reliable. The merchant who did such a thing would not be a merchant, but a fool. Most merchants are not fools, for the logic of the commercial struggle eliminates the fools. If, formerly, the text was, "Denikin has beaten you, now show that you can beat Denikin", today the text is, "If the merchant has beaten you, prove that you can compel him to do business". We have proved it. We have already concluded a number of agreements with very big capitalist firms, both Russian and West-European. We know what they are after, they know what we are after.

Today the object of our activities has changed somewhat. That is exactly what I want to say a few words about, to supplement my already somewhat lengthy report.

In view of the fact that the Genoa situation is precarious and the end of the wavering is not in sight, and because we have made so many concessions in our domestic policy, we must now say: "*Enough! No more concessions!*" The capitalist gentlemen think that they can dally, and the longer they dally the more concessions they will get, but we must say, "*Enough! Tomorrow you will get nothing.*" If they have not learned anything from the history of

Soviet power and its victories, they can do as they please. For our part we have done all we could and have informed the whole world about it. I hope the Congress will confirm the fact that we shall not retreat any further. *The retreat has come to an end*, and, in consequence of that, the nature of our work is changing.

Pravda No. 54,
March 8, 1922

Collected Works,
Vol. 33, pp. 212-23

ELEVENTH CONGRESS OF THE R.C.P.(B.)¹³⁸

MARCH 27-APRIL 2, 1922

FROM THE POLITICAL REPORT OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE R.C.P.(B.) MARCH 27

(Applause.) Comrades, permit me to start the political report of the Central Committee from the end and not from the beginning of the year. The political question most discussed today is Genoa. But since a great deal has already been said on the subject in our press, and since I have already said what is most essential to it in my speech on March 6, which has been published, I would ask you to permit me to refrain from going into details unless you particularly wish me to do so.

On the whole you know everything about Genoa, because much has been written about it in the newspapers—in my opinion too much, to the detriment of the real, practical and urgent requirements of our work of construction in general, and of our economic development in particular. In Europe, in all bourgeois countries, of course, they like to occupy people's minds, or stuff their heads, with all sorts of trash about Genoa. On this occasion (I would say not only on this occasion) we are copying them, and copying them far too much.

I must say that in the Central Committee we have taken very great pains to appoint a delegation of our best diplomats (we now have a fair number of Soviet diplomats, which was not the case in the early period of the Soviet Republic). The Central Committee has drawn up sufficiently detailed instructions for our diplomats at the Genoa Conference; we spent a long time discussing these instructions and considered and reconsidered them several times.

It goes without saying that the question here is, I shall not say of war, because that term is likely to be misunderstood, but at all events one of rivalry. In the bourgeois camp there is a very strong trend, much stronger than any other, that wants to wreck the Genoa Conference. There are trends which greatly favour the Genoa Conference and want it to meet at all costs. The latter have now gained the upper hand. Lastly, in all bourgeois countries there are trends which might be called pacifist trends, among which should be included the entire Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals. It is this section of the bourgeoisie which is advocating a number of pacifist proposals and is trying to concoct something in the nature of a pacifist policy. As Communists we have definite views about this pacifism which it would be superfluous to expound here. Needless to say, we are going to Genoa not as Communists, but as merchants. We must trade, and they must trade. We want the trade to benefit us; they want it to benefit them. The course of the issue will be determined, if only to a small degree, by the skill of our diplomats.

Insofar as we are going to Genoa as merchants it is obviously by no means a matter of indifference to us whether we shall deal with those people from the bourgeois camp who are inclined to settle the problem by war, or with those who are inclined towards pacifism, even the worst kind of pacifism, which from the communist viewpoint will not stand the slightest criticism. It would be a bad merchant, indeed, if he were unable to appreciate this distinction, and, by shaping his tactics accordingly, achieve practical aims.

We are going to Genoa for the practical purpose of expanding trade and of creating the most favourable conditions for its successful development on the widest scale. But we cannot guarantee the success of the Genoa Conference. It would be ridiculous and absurd to give any guarantees on that score. I must say, however, that, weighing up the present possibilities of Genoa in the most sober and cautious manner, I think that it will not be an exaggeration to say that we shall achieve our object.

Through Genoa, if the other parties in the negotiations are sufficiently shrewd and not too stubborn; bypassing

Genoa if they take it into their heads to be stubborn. But we shall achieve our goal!

The fact of the matter is that the most urgent, pressing and practical interests that have been sharply revealed in all the capitalist countries during the past few years call for the development, regulation and expansion of trade with Russia. Since such interests exist, we may argue, we may quarrel, we may disagree on specific combinations—it is highly probable that we shall have to disagree—this fundamental economic necessity will, nevertheless, after all is said and done, make a way for itself. I think we can rest assured of that. I cannot vouch for the date; I cannot vouch for success; but at this gathering we can say with a fair amount of certainty that regular trade relations between the Soviet Republic and all the capitalist countries in the world are certain to continue developing. When I come to it in another part of my report I shall mention the hitches that may possibly occur; but I think that this is all that need be said on the question of Genoa.

Needless to say, the comrades who desire to study the question in greater detail and who are not content with the list of delegates published in the newspapers may set up a commission, or a section, and acquaint themselves with all the material of the Central Committee, and all the correspondence and instructions. Of course, the details we have outlined are provisional, for no one up to now knows exactly who will sit round the table at Genoa, and what terms, or preliminary terms or provisions will be announced. It would be highly inexpedient, and I think practically impossible, to discuss all this here. I repeat, this Congress, through the medium of a section, or a commission, has every opportunity to collect all the documents on this question—both the published documents and those in the possession of the Central Committee.

I shall not say any more, for I am sure that it is not here that our greatest difficulties lie. This is not the question on which the attention of the whole Party should be focussed. The European bourgeois press is artificially and deliberately inflating and exaggerating the importance of this Conference in order to deceive the masses of the working people (as nine-tenths of the bourgeois press in all

these free democratic countries and republics always does). We have succumbed to the influence of this press to some extent. As usual, our press still yields to the old bourgeois habits; it refuses to adopt new, socialist methods, and we have made a greater fuss about this subject than it deserves. In fact, for Communists, especially for those who have lived through such stern years as we have lived through since 1917, and witnessed the formidable political combinations that have appeared in that period, Genoa does not present any great difficulties. I cannot recall any disagreement or controversy on this question either in the Central Committee or in the ranks of the Party. This is natural, for there is nothing controversial here from the point of view of Communists, even bearing in mind the various shades of opinion among them. I repeat: we are going to Genoa as merchants for the purpose of securing the most favourable terms for promoting the trade which has started, which is being carried on, and which, even if someone succeeded in forcibly interrupting it for a time, would inevitably continue to develop after the interruption.

Published in 1922 in *Odinnadtsaty syezd R.K.P.(B.). Stenografichesky otchet* (Eleventh Congress of the Russian Communist Party [Bolsheviks]. Verbatim Report), Moscow, Publishing Department of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.

Collected Works, Vol. 33,
pp. 263-66

**DRAFT DECISION
OF THE ALL-RUSSIA CENTRAL EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE ON THE REPORT OF THE DELEGATION
TO THE GENOA CONFERENCE**

The All-Russia Central Executive Committee's draft resolution on Joffe's report should be drawn up approximately as follows:

1. The delegation of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee has carried out its task correctly in upholding the full sovereignty of the R.S.F.S.R., opposing attempts to force the country into bondage and restore private property, and in concluding a treaty with Germany.¹³⁹

2. The international political and economic situation is characterised by the following features.

Political: the absence of peace and the danger of fresh imperialist wars [Ireland, India, China and others; worsening of relations between Britain and France, between Japan and the United States, *etc.*, *etc.* (*in greater detail*)].

3. Economic: the "victor" countries, exceedingly powerful and enriched by the war (=by plunder), have not been able to re-establish even the former capitalist relations three and a half years after the war [currency chaos; non-fulfilment of the Treaty of Versailles and the impossibility of its fulfilment; non-payment of debts to the United States, *etc.*, *etc.* (*in greater detail*)].

4. Therefore, Article One of the Cannes resolutions, by recognising the *equality* of the two *property systems* (capitalist or private property, and communist property, *so far* accepted only in the R.S.F.S.R.), is thus compelled to recognise, even if only indirectly, the collapse, the bank-

ruptcy of the first property system and the inevitability of its coming to an *agreement* with the second, on terms of equality.

5. The other articles of the Cannes terms, as well as the memoranda, etc., of the powers at Genoa, are in contradiction to this and are, therefore, still-born.

6. True equality of the two property systems—if only as a temporary state, until such time as the entire world abandons private property and the *economic chaos* and wars engendered by it for the higher property system—is found only in the Treaty of Rapallo.

The All-Russia Central Executive Committee, therefore:

welcomes the Treaty of Rapallo as the only correct way out of the difficulties, chaos and danger of wars (as long as there remain two property systems, one of them as obsolete as capitalist property);

recognises only this type of treaty as normal for relations between the R.S.F.S.R. and capitalist countries;

instructs the Council of People's Commissars and the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs to pursue a policy along these lines;

instructs the Presidium of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee to confirm it by agreement with all republics that are in federal relations with the R.S.F.S.R.;

instructs the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs and the Council of People's Commissars to permit deviations from the Rapallo-type treaty only in exceptional circumstances that gain very special advantages for the working people of the R.S.F.S.R., etc.

Written on May 15 or 16, 1922
Published for the first time
in the Fourth Russian edition
of the *Collected Works*

Collected Works, Vol. 33,
pp. 356-57

INTERVIEW GIVEN TO MICHAEL FARBMAN, *OBSERVER AND MANCHESTER GUARDIAN* CORRESPONDENT

1. *Question.* The anti-Russian press describes Herriot's reception in Moscow and the Franco-Russian negotiations as a definite change in Soviet Russia's foreign policy.

Is that true? Is it true that Russia regards British policy in the Middle East as a challenge and is ready to conclude an agreement with France directed against Britain?

Answer. I consider it absolutely incorrect to describe Herriot's reception in Moscow and the Franco-Russian negotiations¹⁴⁰ as a change, even a slight one, in Soviet Russia's policy in general, or as being anti-British in particular. We certainly value very highly both Herriot's reception in Moscow and the step taken towards a rapprochement with France or towards negotiations with her, which have now become possible, probable and, I should like to believe, essential. Any rapprochement with France is something we very much desire, especially in view of the fact that Russia's commercial interests imperatively demand closer relations with this strong continental power. But we are convinced that this rapprochement does not in the least imply that some change must necessarily take place in our policy towards Britain. We believe fully friendly relations with both powers to be quite possible, and that is our aim. We believe that the development of commercial relations will inevitably go a very long way towards achieving this aim. We believe that the interests of Britain and France, rightly understood, will likewise operate in that direction. We believe that the mutual interests of both

Britain and France, insofar as they have points of contact with Russia, do not under any circumstances contain elements of inevitable hostility between Britain and France. On the contrary, we even think that peaceful and friendly relations between these powers and Russia are a guarantee (I am almost prepared to say—the strongest guarantee) that peace and friendship between Britain and France will last a long time, and that all possible, and under present circumstances probable, differences between France and Britain will most speedily and truly find a happy solution.

2. *Question.* Is not the virtual termination of the Greco-Turkish War, a war supported by Britain, an opportune moment for the conclusion of an Anglo-Russian agreement?

Answer. Of course, the termination of the Greco-Turkish War, which had Britain's support, is a factor that, to a certain extent, improves the chances of an Anglo-Russian agreement being concluded. We looked for such an agreement even before that war ended and shall now continue to seek it with the utmost energy. True, some of the problems connected with the termination of that war are objects of our disagreement with Britain. But, first of all, the peace which has followed the Greco-Turkish War is in our opinion such an advantage to international politics as a whole that we hope for an improvement in the general conditions under which they are conducted, thanks to the Greco-Turkish peace. Secondly, we do not consider the differences between Britain and ourselves to be in any way insurmountable. On the contrary, we expect that, with the Middle East problem entering various stages, the near future will show us to what extent we are right in hoping that the end of the Greco-Turkish War will also be the end of the conflicts and differences which placed that war in the forefront of international politics. We are doing everything in our power to make the end of that war also the end of all friction and disagreement with Britain, and we hope that the interests of the British Government will rise on this occasion, too, above any promptings and the frequently insincere utterances of the anti-Russian press.

3. *Question.* Do you consider Russia's participation in the eastern question a matter of prestige alone, or do you proceed exclusively from Russia's real interests? Does the Russian Government agree to

the French proposal to permit Russia's participation in only that part of the Conference that will decide the question of the Straits?

Answer. I consider Russia's participation in the settlement of the Middle East question¹⁴¹ to have nothing to do with prestige. I hope that our international politics as a whole over a period of five years have shown completely that we are quite indifferent to questions of prestige and that we are incapable of putting forward any demand whatsoever or of worsening the real chances of peace between states solely on account of prestige. I am confident that in no other country are the masses so indifferent to prestige and even so prepared to treat the question of prestige as such with happy ridicule. We are of the opinion that modern diplomacy will rapidly come to regard questions of prestige precisely in this way.

Our Middle East policy is a matter of Russia's most real, immediate and vital interest and of the interest of a number of states federated with her. If all these states did not succeed in getting their demand to participate in the Middle East Conference satisfied, there would remain a huge mass of elements of hostility, conflict and discontent; their non-participation would involve such difficulties in purely commercial affairs between Eastern Europe on the one hand, and all other states on the other, that either there would remain no grounds whatever for peaceful coexistence or such existence would be extraordinarily difficult.

The Russian Government, therefore, is not satisfied with the proposal from Paris to allow Russia to participate only in that part of the Conference which will settle the problem of the Straits. We are of the opinion that such a limitation would inevitably lead to a number of very practical, immediate inconveniences, in particular economic inconveniences, from which France and Britain would themselves suffer, most probably in the near future.

4. *Question.* What is the Russian programme for the solution of the Straits problem?

Answer. Our Straits programme (still only approximate, of course) contains, among other things, the following:

First, the satisfaction of Turkey's national aspirations. We consider this essential, and not only in the interests of national independence. Our five years' experience in settling the national question in a country that contains a tremendous number of nationalities such as could hardly be found in any other country, gives us the full conviction that under such circumstances the only correct attitude to the interests of nations is to meet those interests in full and provide conditions that exclude any possibility of conflicts on that score. Our experience has left us with the firm conviction that only exclusive attention to the interests of various nations can remove grounds for conflicts, can remove mutual mistrust, can remove the fear of any intrigues and create that confidence, especially on the part of workers and peasants speaking different languages, without which there absolutely cannot be peaceful relations between peoples or anything like a successful development of everything that is of value in present-day civilisation.

Secondly, our programme includes the closing of the Straits to all warships in times of peace and of war. This is in the direct commercial interests of all powers, not only of those whose territory is in the immediate vicinity of the Straits, but of all others, too. It must be remembered that all over the world there has been an inordinate amount of pacifist talk, an unusual number of pacifist phrases and assurances, and even vows against war and against peace, although there is usually little preparedness on the part of the majority of states, especially on the part of the modern civilised states, to take any realistic steps, even the most simple, to ensure peace. On this, and on similar questions, we should like to see a minimum of general assurances, solemn promises and grandiloquent formulas, and the greatest possible number of the simplest and most obvious decisions and measures that would certainly lead to peace, if not to the complete elimination of the war danger.

Thirdly, our programme on the Straits includes complete freedom of commerce by sea. After what I have said above I do not think it at all necessary to explain this point or make it more concrete.

5. Question. Would the Russian Government agree to the League of Nations controlling the Straits if the League were to include in its composition Russia, Turkey, Germany and the United States?

Or would Russia insist on the establishment of a special commission to control the Straits?

Answer. We are, of course, opposed to the League of Nations, and I do not think that it is only our economic and political system with its specific features that accounts for our negative attitude towards the League; the interests of peace, regarded from the point of view of the concrete conditions of modern international politics in general, also fully justify that negative attitude. The League of Nations bears so many marks of its world war origin, it is so intimately bound up with the Versailles Treaty and is so marked by the absence of anything resembling the establishment of the real equality of rights between nations, anything resembling a real chance of their peaceful coexistence, that I think our negative attitude to the League can be appreciated and does not stand in need of further comment.

6. Question. Does the refusal to ratify the agreement with Urquhart mean a victory of the "Left Communists"? What are the objective conditions which would make possible a resumption of negotiations and the ratification of the agreement with Urquhart?

Answer. The question of concluding an agreement with Urquhart was raised by our government when I was ill and was unable to take part in affairs of state. Therefore I am not yet fully informed of all the details of this matter. Nevertheless I can assert quite definitely that there is not, nor can there now be, any question of a victory for the Left Communists. I know this from my direct observation of the course of government affairs.

The fact of the matter is that Britain's act of injustice, expressed in her unwillingness to admit us to the Conference, was so unexpected, aroused such indignation in Russia and so firmly united not only the Right with the Left Communists but also united the huge mass of the non-Party population of Russia, the workers and peasants, that things did not and could not reach the point of disagreement between the Left and Right Communists.

The reason given for our rejection of the Urquhart agreement was a direct expression, one may say, not only of the general Party sentiment but of that of the entire people, i.e., the sentiment of the entire mass of the workers and peasants.

The resumption of negotiations and the subsequent ratification of an agreement with Urquhart depend primarily on the elimination of the flagrant injustices committed against Russia by Britain in curtailing her right to participate in the Middle East Conference. As far as the concrete terms submitted to us by Urquhart are concerned, I have not yet had time to look into this matter in sufficient detail, and can only say that the government has decided to let the supporters and opponents of this agreement have their say in our press as soon as possible, in order to obtain, from the most objective and motivated discussion, material for the overall verification of all the pros and cons and for a decision on the issue in a manner that best accords with Russia's interests.

7. *Question.* To what extent are the accusations of the anti-Russian press in Britain justified when they assert that the recent arrests of industrialists in Moscow signify the end of the New Economic Policy and a reversion to the policy of nationalisation and confiscation?

Answer. As to your question concerning the accusations made against us in the British anti-Russian press that "Moscow industrialists" were being arrested, I must say that I have today just read in our newspaper (*Izvestia*) an item headed "Arrests of Black Marketeers". None other than Comrade Z. B. Katsnelson, chief of the Economic Division of the State Political Administration, tells us in this article that there was no question of arrests of industrialists, and that "rumours circulated by enemies of Soviet power, both within the R.S.F.S.R. and abroad, that the arrests are infringements on the freedom to trade are actually nothing but *nonsensical* inventions that have the definite counter-revolutionary intent of disrupting the economic relations that are being established with Western Europe".

Indeed, those arrested were exclusively profiteers on the so-called black market and our authorities are in possession

of evidence establishing connection between these black-market currency profiteers and certain employees of foreign missions in Moscow. This evidence shows not only the sale of platinum and of gold bars but also the *organisation of contraband shipments of these valuables abroad*.

From this you can see how absolutely unfounded are the rumours that we are putting an end to the New Economic Policy and how utterly false are the accusations made by the anti-Russian press in Britain, which is trying by the most unheard-of distortion and deception to present our policy in a false light. Actually, there has never been any mention in any government circles whatsoever of discontinuing the New Economic Policy and returning to the old. Incidentally, the whole work of the government during the session of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee now in progress is aimed at obtaining the widest possible legislative sanction for what is known as the New Economic Policy, so as to eliminate all possibility of any deviation from it.

October 27, 1922

Pravda No. 254,
November 10, 1922

Collected Works, Vol. 33,
pp. 383-89

**FROM THE SPEECH AT THE FOURTH SESSION
OF THE ALL-RUSSIA CENTRAL EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE, NINTH CONVOCATION**

October 31, 1922¹⁴²

(*Stormy, prolonged applause. All rise.*) Comrades, permit me to confine myself to a few words of greeting. We should first of all, of course, send our greetings to the Red Army, which has recently given further proof of its valour by capturing Vladivostok and clearing the entire territory of the last of the republics linked with Soviet Russia. I am sure that I am expressing the general opinion when I say that we all welcome this new feat of the Red Army, and also the fact that apparently a very important step has been taken towards bringing the war to a close; the last of the whiteguard forces have been driven into the sea. (*Applause.*) I think that our Red Army has rid us for a long time of the possibility of another whiteguard attack on Russia or on any of the republics that are directly or indirectly, closely or more or less remotely, connected with us.

At the same time, however, in order to avoid adopting a tone of inordinate self-adulation, we must say that the strength of the Red Army and its recent victory were not the only factors in this; other factors were the international situation and our diplomacy.

Some time ago Japan and the United States signed a pact to support Kolchak. But that was so long ago that many people have probably forgotten it completely. But that was the case. We have made such pacts impossible now, and,

due to our efforts, the Japanese, in spite of their military strength, declared that they would withdraw, and have kept their promise; our diplomacy must also be given credit for this. I shall not drag out my brief greeting by saying what brought us that success. I shall only say that in the near future our diplomats will once again have to display their skill in a matter of immense importance, and one in which we are vitally interested. I have in mind the Middle East Conference that Great Britain is convening in Lausanne on November 13. I am sure that there, too, our diplomats will prove their mettle, and that we shall be able to vindicate the interests of all our federated republics, and of the R.S.F.S.R. At all events, we shall succeed in revealing to the masses where and what the obstacle is, and to what extent it is an obstacle to the legitimate desires and aspirations not only of ourselves, but of all countries interested in the question of the Straits.

I shall limit my utterances on foreign politics to these brief remarks and shall now deal with the proceedings of this session.

I think that here we have achieved no small success in spite of the fact that to some people the questions dealt with may at first sight appear to be not so very important. Take the first code of laws that you have already passed—the Code of Labour Laws. Our adoption of a code of laws which firmly lays down the principles of labour legislation such as the eight-hour day at a time when in all other countries the working class is being heavily attacked is a tremendous achievement for Soviet rule. True, there are people who, perhaps, would desire something more from this code; but I think that such a desire would be totally unjustified.

We must bear in mind that compared with all the countries where fierce capitalist competition is raging, where there are millions and tens of millions of unemployed, and where the capitalists are forming vast combinations and are launching an offensive against the working class—if we compare ourselves with those countries, we are the least cultured, our productivity of labour is the lowest, and we are the least efficient. This is, I would say, a very unpleasant thing to have to admit. I think, however,

that precisely because we do not disguise such things with platitudes and stereotyped catchwords, but candidly admit them, precisely because we all admit, and are not afraid to proclaim from this rostrum, that we are exerting more efforts than any other country to rectify all this, we shall succeed in catching up with these countries faster than they ever dreamed possible.

This will not be done at a fantastic speed, of course, it will naturally take us several years of laborious effort to achieve it. It goes without saying that nothing can be done overnight. We have been in existence for five years, we have seen at what speed social relations change, and have learned to appreciate what time means; and we must go on learning what it means. Nobody believes that any important change can be achieved at a fantastic speed; but we do believe in real speed, speed compared with the rate of development in any period in history you like to take—especially if progress is guided by a genuinely revolutionary party; and this speed we shall achieve at all costs.

Pravda No. 247
November 1, 1922

Collected Works, Vol. 33,
pp. 390-92

FROM THE SPEECH AT A PLENARY SESSION OF THE MOSCOW SOVIET

November 20, 1922¹⁴³

As to foreign policy, we had the fewest changes in that field. We pursued the line that we had adopted earlier, and I think I can say with a clear conscience that we pursued it quite consistently and with enormous success. There is no need, I think, to deal with that in detail; the capture of Vladivostok, the ensuing demonstration and the declaration of federation which you read in the press¹⁴⁴ the other day have proved and shown with the utmost clarity that no changes are necessary in this respect. The road we are on is absolutely clearly and well defined, and has ensured us success in face of all the countries of the world, although some of them are still prepared to declare that they refuse to sit at one table with us. Nevertheless, economic relations, followed by diplomatic relations, are improving, must improve, and certainly will improve. Every country which resists this risks being late, and perhaps in some quite substantial things, it risks being at a disadvantage. All of us see this now, and not only from the press, from the newspapers. I think that in their trips abroad comrades are also finding the changes very great. In that respect, to use an old simile, we have not changed to other trains, or to other conveyances.

But as regards our home policy, the change we made in the spring of 1921, which was necessitated by such extremely powerful and convincing circumstances that no

debates or disagreements arose among us about it—that change continues to cause us some difficulties, great difficulties, I would say. Not because we have any doubts about the need for the turn—no doubts exist in that respect—not because we have any doubts as to whether the test of our New Economic Policy has yielded the successes we expected. No doubts exist on that score—I can say this quite definitely—either in the ranks of our Party or in the ranks of the huge mass of non-Party workers and peasants.

In this sense the problem presents no difficulties. The difficulties we have stem from our being faced with a task whose solution very often requires the services of new people, extraordinary measures and extraordinary methods. Doubts still exist among us as to whether this or that is correct. There are changes in one direction or another. And it should be said that both will continue for quite a long time. "The New Economic Policy!" A strange title. It was called a New Economic Policy because it turned things back. We are now retreating, going back, as it were; but we are doing so in order, after first retreating, to take a running start and make a bigger leap forward. It was on this condition alone that we retreated in pursuing our New Economic Policy. Where and how we must now regroup, adapt and reorganise in order to start a most stubborn offensive after our retreat, we do not yet know. To carry out all these operations properly we need, as the proverb says, to look not ten but a hundred times before we leap. We must do so in order to cope with the incredible difficulties we encounter in dealing with all our tasks and problems. You know perfectly well what sacrifices have been made to achieve what has been achieved; you know how long the Civil War has dragged on and what effort it has cost. Well now, the capture of Vladivostok has shown all of us (though Vladivostok is a long way off, it is after all one of our own towns) (*prolonged applause*) everybody's desire to join us, to join in our achievements. The Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic now stretches from here to there. This desire has rid us both of our civil enemies and of the foreign enemies who attacked us. I am referring to Japan.

We have won quite a definite diplomatic position, recognised by the whole world. All of you see it. You see its results, but how much time we needed to get it! We have now won the recognition of our rights by our enemies both in economic and in commercial policy. This is proved by the conclusion of trade agreements.

We can see why we, who eighteen months ago took the path of the so-called New Economic Policy, are finding it so incredibly difficult to advance along that path. We live in a country devastated so severely by war, knocked out of anything like the normal course of life, in a country that has suffered and endured so much, that willy-nilly we are beginning all our calculations with a very, very small percentage—the pre-war percentage. We apply this yardstick to the conditions of our life, we sometimes do so very impatiently, heatedly, and always end up with the conviction that the difficulties are vast. The task we have set ourselves in this field seems all the more vast because we are comparing it with the state of affairs in any ordinary bourgeois country. We have set ourselves this task because we understood that it was no use expecting the wealthy powers to give us the assistance usually forthcoming under such circumstances.* After the Civil War we have been subjected to very nearly a boycott, that is, we have been told that the economic ties that are customary and normal in the capitalist world will not be maintained in our case.

Over eighteen months have passed since we undertook the New Economic Policy, and even a longer period has passed since we concluded our first international treaty. Nonetheless, this boycott of us by all the bourgeoisie and all governments continues to be felt. We could not count on anything else when we adopted the new economic conditions; yet we had no doubt that we had to make the

* In the verbatim report the text reads further: "and that even if we took into consideration the extremely high, say such-and-such a rate of interest, that is imposed in these circumstances on a country that, to use the accepted term, is rendered aid. Properly speaking, these rates of interest are very far from being aid. To put it bluntly, they would deserve a far less polite term than the word aid, but even these usual conditions would have been onerous for us."—Ed.

change and achieve success single-handed. The further we go, the clearer it becomes that any aid that may be rendered to us, that will be rendered to us by the capitalist powers, will, far from eliminating this condition, in all likelihood and in the overwhelming majority of cases intensify it, accentuate it still further. "Single-handed"—we told ourselves. "Single-handed"—we are told by almost every capitalist country with which we have concluded any deals, with which we have undertaken any engagements, with which we have begun any negotiations. And that is where the special difficulty lies. We must realise this difficulty. We have built up our own political system in more than three years of work, incredibly hard work that was incredibly full of heroism. In the position in which we were till now we had no time to see whether we would smash something needlessly, no time to see whether there would be many sacrifices, because there were sacrifices enough, because the struggle which we then began (you know this perfectly well and there is no need to dwell on it) was a life-and-death struggle against the old social system, against which we fought to forge for ourselves a right to existence, to peaceful development. And we have won it. It is not we who say this, it is not the testimony of witnesses who may be accused of being partial to us. It is the testimony of witnesses who are in the camp of our enemies and who are naturally partial—not in our favour, however, but against us. These witnesses were in Denikin's camp. They directed the occupation. And we know that their partiality cost us very dear, cost us colossal destruction. We suffered all sorts of losses on their account, and lost values of all kinds, including the greatest of all values—human lives—on an incredibly large scale. Now we must scrutinise our tasks most carefully and understand that the main task will be not to give up our previous gains. We shall not give up a single one of our old gains. (*Applause.*) Yet we are also faced with an entirely new task; the old may prove a downright obstacle. To understand this task is most difficult. Yet it must be understood, so that we may learn how to work when, so to speak, it is necessary to turn ourselves inside out. I think, comrades, that these words and slogans are understandable, because

for nearly a year, during my enforced absence, you have had in practice, handling the jobs on hand, to speak and think of this in various ways and on hundreds of occasions, and I am confident that your reflections on that score can only lead to one conclusion, namely, that today we must display still more of the flexibility which we employed till now in the Civil War.

We must not abandon the old. The series of concessions that adapt us to the capitalist powers is a series of concessions that enables them to make contact with us, ensures them a profit which is sometimes bigger, perhaps, than it should be. At the same time, we are conceding but a little part of the means of production, which are held almost entirely by our state. The other day the papers discussed the concession proposed by the Englishman Urquhart, who has hitherto been against us almost throughout the Civil War. He used to say: "We shall achieve our aim in the Civil War against Russia, against the Russia that has dared to deprive us of this and of that." And after all that we had to enter into negotiations with him. We did not refuse them, we undertook them with the greatest joy, but we said: "Beg your pardon, but we shall not give up what we have won. Our Russia is so big, our economic potentialities are so numerous, and we feel justified in not rejecting your kind proposal, but we shall discuss it soberly, like businessmen." True, nothing came of our first talk, because we could not agree to his proposal for political reasons. We had to reject it. So long as the British did not entertain the possibility of our participating in the negotiations on the Straits, the Dardanelles, we had to reject it, but right after doing so we had to start examining the matter in substance. We discussed whether or not it was of advantage to us, whether we would profit from concluding this concession agreement, and if so, under what circumstances it would be profitable. We had to talk about the price. That, comrades, is what shows you clearly how much our present approach to problems should differ from our former approach. Formerly the Communist said: "I give my life", and it seemed very simple to him, although it was not always so simple. Now, however, we Communists face quite another task. We must now take all things into

account, and each of you must learn to be prudent. We must calculate how, in the capitalist environment, we can ensure our existence, how we can profit by our enemies, who, of course, will bargain, who have never forgotten how to bargain and will bargain at our expense. We are not forgetting that either, and do not in the least imagine commercial people anywhere turning into lambs and, having turned into lambs, offering us blessings of all sorts for nothing. That does not happen, and we do not expect it, but count on the fact that we, who are accustomed to putting up a fight, will find a way out and prove capable of trading, and profiting, and emerging safely from difficult economic situations. That is a very difficult task. That is the task we are working on now. I should like us to realise clearly how great is the abyss between the old and the new tasks. However great the abyss may be, we learned to manoeuvre during the war, and we must understand that the manoeuvre we now have to perform, in the midst of which we now are, is the most difficult one. But then it seems to be our last manoeuvre. We must test our strength in this field and prove that we have learned more than just the lessons of yesterday and do not just keep repeating the fundamentals. Nothing of the kind. We have begun to relearn, and shall relearn in such a way that we shall achieve definite and obvious success. And it is for the sake of this relearning, I think, that we must again firmly promise one another that under the name of the New Economic Policy we have turned back, but turned back in such a way as to surrender nothing of the new, and yet to give the capitalists such advantages as will compel any state, however hostile to us, to establish contacts and to deal with us. Comrade Krasin, who has had many talks with Urquhart, the head and backbone of the whole intervention, said that Urquhart, after all his attempts to foist the old system on us at all costs, throughout Russia, seated himself at the same table with him, with Krasin, and began asking: "What's the price? How much? For how many years?" (*Applause.*) This is still quite far from our concluding concession deals and thus entering into treaty relations that are perfectly precise and binding—from the viewpoint of bourgeois society—but we can already see that we are

coming to it, have nearly come to it, but have not quite arrived. We must admit that, comrades, and not be swell-headed. We are still far from having fully achieved the things that will make us strong, self-reliant and calmly confident that no capitalist deals can frighten us, calmly confident that however difficult a deal may be we shall conclude it, we shall get to the bottom of it and settle it. That is why the work—both political and Party—that we have begun in this sphere must be continued, and that is why we must change from the old methods to entirely new ones.

We still have the old machinery, and our task now is to remould it along new lines. We cannot do so at once, but we must see to it that the Communists we have are properly placed. What we need is that they, the Communists, should control the machinery they are assigned to, and not, as so often happens with us, that the machinery should control them. We should make no secret of it, and speak of it frankly. Such are the tasks and the difficulties that confront us—and that at a moment when we have set out on our practical path, when we must not approach socialism as if it were an icon painted in festive colours. We need to take the right direction, we need to see that everything is checked, that the masses, the entire population, check the path we follow and say: "Yes, this is better than the old system." That is the task we have set ourselves. Our Party, a little group of people in comparison with the country's total population, has tackled this job. This tiny nucleus has set itself the task of remaking everything, and it will do so. We have proved that this is no utopia but a cause which people live by. We have all seen this. This has already been done. We must remake things in such a way that the great majority of the masses, the peasants and workers, will say: "It is not you who praise yourselves, but we. We say that you have achieved splendid results, after which no intelligent person will ever dream of returning to the old." We have not reached that point yet. *That is why NEP remains the main, current, and all-embracing slogan of today.* We shall not forget a single one of the slogans we learned yesterday. We can say that quite calmly, without the slightest hesitation, say it to anybody, and

every step we take demonstrates it. But we still have to adapt ourselves to the New Economic Policy. We must know how to overcome, to reduce to a definite minimum all its negative features, which there is no need to enumerate and which you know perfectly well. We must know how to arrange everything shrewdly. Our legislation gives us every opportunity to do so. Shall we be able to get things going properly? That is still far from being settled. We are making a study of things. Every issue of our Party newspaper offers you a dozen articles which tell you that at such-and-such a factory, owned by so-and-so, the rental terms are such-and-such, whereas at another, where our Communist comrade is the manager, the terms are such-and-such. Does it yield a profit or not, does it pay its way or not? We have approached the very core of the everyday problems, and that is a tremendous achievement. Socialism is no longer a matter of the distant future, or an abstract picture, or an icon. Our opinion of icons is the same—a very bad one. We have brought socialism into everyday life and must here see how matters stand. That is the task of our day, the task of our epoch. Permit me to conclude by expressing confidence that difficult as this task may be, new as it may be compared with our previous task, and numerous as the difficulties may be that it entails, we shall all—not in a day, but in a few years—all of us together fulfil it whatever the cost, so that NEP Russia will become socialist Russia. (*Stormy, prolonged applause.*)

NOTES ON THE TASKS OF OUR DELEGATION AT THE HAGUE¹⁴⁵

On the question of combating the danger of war, in connection with the Conference at The Hague, I think that the greatest difficulty lies in overcoming the prejudice that this is a simple, clear and comparatively easy question.

“We shall retaliate to war by a strike or a revolution”—that is what all the prominent reformist leaders usually say to the working class. And very often the seeming radicalness of the measures proposed satisfies and appeases the workers, co-operators and peasants.

Perhaps the most correct method would be to start with the sharpest refutation of this opinion; to declare that particularly now, after the recent war, only the most foolish or utterly dishonest people can assert that such an answer to the question of combating war is of any use; to declare that it is impossible to “retaliate” to war by a strike, just as it is impossible to “retaliate” to war by revolution in the simple and literal sense of these terms.

We must explain the real situation to the people, show them that war is hatched in the greatest secrecy, and that the ordinary workers’ organisations, even if they call themselves revolutionary organisations, are utterly helpless in face of a really impending war.

We must explain to the people again and again in the most concrete manner possible how matters stood in the last war, and why they could not have been otherwise.

We must take special pains to explain that the question of "defence of the fatherland" will inevitably arise, and that the overwhelming majority of the working people will inevitably decide it in favour of their bourgeoisie.

Therefore, first, it is necessary to explain what "defence of the fatherland" means. Second, in connection with this, it is necessary to explain what "defeatism" means. Lastly, we must explain that the only possible method of combatting war is to preserve existing, and to form new, illegal organisations in which all revolutionaries taking part in a war carry on *prolonged* anti-war activities—all this must be brought into the forefront.

Boycott war—that is a silly catch-phrase. Communists must take part in every war, even the most reactionary.

Examples from, say, pre-war German literature, and in particular, the example of the Basle Congress of 1912, should be used as especially concrete proof that the theoretical admissions that war is criminal, that socialists cannot condone war, etc., turn out to be empty phrases, because there is nothing concrete in them. The masses are not given a really vivid idea of how war may and will creep up on them. On the contrary, every day the dominant press, in an infinite number of copies, obscures this question and weaves such lies around it that the feeble socialist press is absolutely impotent against it, the more so that even in time of peace it propounds fundamentally erroneous views on this point. In all probability, the communist press in most countries will also disgrace itself.

I think that our delegates at the International Congress of Co-operators and Trade Unionists should distribute their functions among themselves and expose all the sophistries that are being advanced at the present time in justification of war.

These sophistries are, perhaps, the principal means by which the bourgeois press rallies the masses in support of war; and the main reason why we are so impotent in face of war is either that we do not expose these sophistries beforehand, or still more that we, in the spirit of the Basle Manifesto of 1912, waive them aside with the cheap, boastful and utterly empty phrase that we shall not allow

war to break out, that we fully understand that war is a crime, etc.

I think that if we have several people at The Hague Conference who are capable of delivering speeches against war in various languages, the most important thing would be to refute the opinion that the delegates at the Conference are opponents of war, that they understand how war may and will come upon them at the most unexpected moment, that they to any extent understand what methods should be adopted to combat war, that they are to any extent in a position to adopt reasonable and effective measures to combat war.

Using the experience of the recent war to illustrate the point, we must explain what a host of both theoretical and practical questions will arise on the morrow of the declaration of war, and that the vast majority of the men called up for military service will have no opportunity to examine these questions with anything like clear heads, or in a conscientious and unprejudiced manner.

I think that this question must be explained in extraordinary detail, and in two ways:

First, by relating and analysing what happened during the last war and telling all those present that they are ignorant of this, or pretend that they know about it, but actually shut their eyes to what is the very pivot of the question which must be understood if any real efforts are to be made to combat war. On this point I think it is necessary to examine all the opinions and shades of opinion that arose among Russian socialists concerning the last war. We must show that those shades of opinion did not emerge accidentally, but out of the very nature of modern wars in general. We must prove that without an analysis of these opinions, without ascertaining why they inevitably arise and why they are of decisive significance in the matter of combating war—without such an analysis it is utterly impossible to make any preparations for war, or even to take an intelligent stand on it.

Secondly, we must take the present conflicts, even the most insignificant, to illustrate the fact that war may break out any day as a consequence of a dispute between Great

Britain and France over some point of their treaty with Turkey, or between the U.S.A. and Japan over some trivial disagreement on any Pacific question, or between any of the big powers over colonies, tariffs, or general commercial policy, etc., etc. It seems to me that if there is the slightest doubt about being able at The Hague to say all we want to say against war with the utmost freedom, we should consider various stratagems that will enable us to say at least what is most important and to publish in pamphlet form what could not be said. We must take the risk of our speaker being stopped by the chairman.

I think that for the same purpose the delegation should consist not only of speakers who are able, and whose duty it shall be, to make speeches against war as a whole, i.e., to enlarge on all the main arguments and all the conditions for combating war, but also of people who know all the three principal foreign languages, whose business it shall be to enter into conversation with the delegates and to ascertain how far they understand the main arguments, what need there is to advance certain arguments and to quote certain examples.

Perhaps on a number of questions the mere quoting of facts of the last war will be sufficient to produce serious effect. Perhaps on a number of other questions serious effect can be produced only by explaining the conflicts that exist today between the various countries and how likely they are to develop into armed collisions.

Apropos of the question of combating war, I remember that a number of declarations have been made by our Communist deputies, in parliament and outside parliament, which contain monstrously incorrect and monstrously thoughtless statements on this subject. I think these declarations, particularly if they have been made since the war, must be subjected to determined and ruthless criticism, and the name of each person who made them should be mentioned. Opinion concerning these speakers may be expressed in the mildest terms, particularly if circumstances require it, but not a single case of this kind should be passed over in silence, for thoughtlessness on this question is an evil that outweighs all others and cannot be treated lightly.

A number of decisions have been adopted by workers' congresses which are unpardonably foolish and thoughtless.

All material should be immediately collected, and all the separate parts and particles of the subject, and the whole "strategy" to be pursued should be thoroughly discussed at a congress.

On such a question, not only a mistake, but even lack of thoroughness on our part will be unpardonable.

December 4, 1922

First published in *Pravda* No. 96,
April 26, 1924
Signed: *Lenin*

Collected Works, Vol. 33,
pp. 447-51

RE THE MONOPOLY OF FOREIGN TRADE¹⁴⁶

To Comrade Stalin for the Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee

I think it is most important to discuss Comrade Bukharin's letter. His first point says that "neither Lenin nor Krasin says a word about the incalculable losses that are borne by the economy of the country as a consequence of the inefficiency of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade, due to the 'principles' on which it is organised; they do not say a word about the losses incurred because we ourselves are unable (and will not be able for a long time for quite understandable reasons) to mobilise the peasants' stocks of goods and use them for international trade."

This statement is positively untrue, for in his §2 Krasin clearly discusses the formation of mixed companies as a means, firstly, of mobilising the peasants' stocks of goods, and secondly, of obtaining for our Exchequer no less than half the profits accruing from this mobilisation. Thus it is Bukharin who is trying to evade the issue, for he refuses to see that the profits accruing from the "mobilisation of the peasants' stocks of goods" will go wholly and entirely into the pockets of the Nepmen. The question is: will our People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade operate for the benefit of the Nepmen or of our proletarian state? This is a fundamental question over which a fight can and should be put up at a Party Congress.

Compared with this primary, fundamental question of principle, the question of the inefficiency of the People's

Commissariat of Foreign Trade is only a minor one, for this inefficiency is only part and parcel of the inefficiency of all our People's Commissariats, and is due to their general social structure; to remedy this we shall require many years of persistent effort to improve education and to raise the general standard.

The second point in Bukharin's theses says that "points like §5 of Krasin's theses, for example, are fully applicable to concessions in general". This, too, is glaringly untrue, for Krasin's 5th thesis states that "the most pernicious exploiter, the merchant, profiteer, the agent of foreign capital, operating with dollars, pounds and Swedish crowns, will be artificially introduced into the rural districts". Nothing of the kind will happen in the case of concessions, which not only stipulate territory, but also envisage special permission to trade in specified articles; and what is most important, we control the trade in the articles specified in the concession. Without saying a single word in opposition to Krasin's argument that we shall be unable to keep free trade within the limits laid down by the decision of the Plenary Meeting of October 6, that trade will be torn out of our hands by pressure brought to bear not only by smugglers, but also by the entire peasantry—without saying a word in answer to this fundamental economic and class argument, Bukharin hurls accusations against Krasin that are amazingly groundless.

In the third point of his letter Bukharin writes "§3 of Krasin's theses". (By mistake he mentions §3 instead of §4.) "We are maintaining our frontiers", and he asks: "What does this mean? In reality, this means that we are doing nothing. It is exactly like a shop with a splendid window, but with nothing on its shelves (the 'shut the shops system')." Krasin very definitely says that we are maintaining our frontiers not so much by tariffs, or frontier guards, as by means of our monopoly of foreign trade. Bukharin does not say a word to refute this obvious, positive and indisputable fact, nor can he do so. His sneering reference to the "shut the shops system" belongs to the category of expressions to which Marx, in his day, retorted with the expression "free-trader *vulgaris*",

for it is nothing more than a vulgar free-trader catch-phrase.

Further, in his fourth point, Bukharin accuses Krasin of failing to realise that we must improve our tariff system, and at the same time he says that I am wrong in talking about having inspectors all over the country, because export and import bases are the only point under discussion. Here, too, Bukharin's objections are amazingly thoughtless and quite beside the point; for Krasin not only realises that we must improve our tariff system and not only fully admits it, but says so with a definiteness that leaves no room for the slightest doubt. This improvement consists, firstly, in our adopting the monopoly of foreign trade, and secondly, in the formation of mixed companies.

Bukharin does not see—this is his most amazing mistake, and a purely theoretical one at that—that no tariff system can be effective in the epoch of imperialism when there are monstrous contrasts between pauper countries and immensely rich countries. Several times Bukharin mentions tariff barriers, failing to realise that under the circumstances indicated any of the wealthy industrial countries can completely break down such tariff barriers. To do this it will be sufficient for it to introduce an export bounty to encourage the export to Russia of goods upon which we have imposed high import duties. All of the industrial countries have more than enough money for this purpose, and by means of such a measure any of them could easily ruin our home industry.

Consequently, all Bukharin's arguments about the tariff system would in practice only leave Russian industry entirely unprotected and lead to the adoption of free trading under a very flimsy veil. We must oppose this with all our might and carry our opposition right to a Party Congress, for in the present epoch of imperialism the only system of protection worthy of consideration is the monopoly of foreign trade.

Bukharin's accusation (in his fifth point) that Krasin fails to appreciate the importance of increasing circulation is utterly refuted by what Krasin says about mixed companies, for these mixed companies have no other purpose than to increase circulation and to provide real

protection for our Russian industry and not the fictitious protection of tariff barriers.

Further, in point six, in answer to me, Bukharin writes that he attaches no importance to the fact that the peasants will enter into profitable transactions, and that the struggle will proceed between the Soviet government and the exporters and not between the peasants and the Soviet government. Here, too, he is absolutely wrong, for with the difference in prices that I have indicated (for example, in Russia the price of flax is 4 rubles 50 kopeks, while in Britain it is 14 rubles), the exporter will be able to mobilise all the peasants around himself in the swiftest and most certain manner. In practice, Bukharin is acting as an advocate of the profiteer, of the petty bourgeois and of the upper stratum of the peasantry in opposition to the industrial proletariat, which will be totally unable to build up its own industry and make Russia an industrial country unless it has the protection, not of tariffs, but of the monopoly of foreign trade. In view of the conditions at present prevailing in Russia, any other form of protection would be absolutely fictitious; it would be merely paper protection, from which the proletariat would derive no benefit whatever. Hence, from the viewpoint of the proletariat and of its industry, the present fight rages around fundamental principles. The mixed company system is the only system that can be really effective in improving the defective machinery of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade; for under this system foreign and Russian merchants will be operating side by side. If we fail to learn the business thoroughly even under such circumstances, it will prove that ours is a nation of hopeless fools.

By talking about "tariff barriers" we shall only be concealing from ourselves the dangers which Krasin points out quite clearly, and which Bukharin has failed to refute in the slightest degree.

I will add that the partial opening of the frontiers would be fraught with grave currency dangers, for in practice we should be reduced to the position of Germany; there would be the grave danger that the petty-bourgeoisie and all sorts of agents of émigré Russia would penetrate into Russia,

without our having the slightest possibility of exercising control over them.

The utilisation of mixed companies as a means of obtaining serious and long tuition is the only road to the restoration of our industry.

Lenin

First published in full in 1930
in the journal *Proletarskaya
Revolutsia* No. 2-3

Collected Works, Vol. 33,
pp. 455-59

BETTER FEWER, BUT BETTER¹⁴⁷ (Extract)

The general feature of our present life is the following: we have destroyed capitalist industry and have done our best to raze to the ground the medieval institutions and landed proprietorship, and thus created a small and very small peasantry, which is following the lead of the proletariat because it believes in the results of its revolutionary work. It is not easy for us, however, to keep going until the socialist revolution is victorious in more developed countries merely with the aid of this confidence, because economic necessity, especially under NEP, keeps the productivity of labour of the small and very small peasants at an extremely low level. Moreover, the international situation, too, threw Russia back and, by and large, reduced the labour productivity of the people to a level considerably below pre-war. The West-European capitalist powers, partly deliberately and partly unconsciously, did everything they could to throw us back, to utilise the elements of the Civil War in Russia in order to spread as much ruin in the country as possible. It was precisely this way out of the imperialist war that seemed to have many advantages. They argued somewhat as follows: "If we fail to overthrow the revolutionary system in Russia, we shall, at all events, hinder its progress towards socialism." And from their point of view they could argue in no other way. In the end, their problem was half-solved. They failed to overthrow the new system created by the revolution, but they did prevent it from at once taking the step forward that

would have justified the forecasts of the socialists, that would have enabled the latter to develop the productive forces with enormous speed, to develop all the potentialities which, taken together, would have produced socialism; socialists would thus have proved to all and sundry that socialism contains within itself gigantic forces and that mankind had now entered into a new stage of development of extraordinarily brilliant prospects.

The system of international relationships which has now taken shape is one in which a European state, Germany, is enslaved by the victor countries. Furthermore, owing to their victory, a number of states, the oldest states in the West, are in a position to make some insignificant concessions to their oppressed classes—concessions which, insignificant though they are, nevertheless retard the revolutionary movement in those countries and create some semblance of "class truce".

At the same time, as a result of the last imperialist war, a number of countries of the East, India, China, etc., have been completely jolted out of the rut. Their development has definitely shifted to general European capitalist lines. The general European ferment has begun to affect them, and it is now clear to the whole world that they have been drawn into a process of development that must lead to a crisis in the whole of world capitalism.

Thus, at the present time we are confronted with the question—shall we be able to hold on with our small and very small peasant production, and in our present state of ruin, until the West European capitalist countries consummate their development towards socialism? But they are consummating it not as we formerly expected. They are not consummating it through the gradual "maturing" of socialism, but through the exploitation of some countries by others, through the exploitation of the first of the countries vanquished in the imperialist war combined with the exploitation of the whole of the East. On the other hand, precisely as a result of the first imperialist war, the East has been definitely drawn into the revolutionary movement, has been definitely drawn into the general maelstrom of the world revolutionary movement.

What tactics does this situation prescribe for our

country? Obviously the following. We must display extreme caution so as to preserve our workers' government and to retain our small and very small peasantry under its leadership and authority. We have the advantage that the whole world is now passing to a movement that must give rise to a world socialist revolution. But we are labouring under the disadvantage that the imperialists have succeeded in splitting the world into two camps; and this split is made more complicated by the fact that it is extremely difficult for Germany, which is really a land of advanced, cultured, capitalist development, to rise to her feet. All the capitalist powers of what is called the West are pecking at her and preventing her from rising. On the other hand, the entire East, with its hundreds of millions of exploited working people, reduced to the last degree of human suffering, has been forced into a position where its physical and material strength cannot possibly be compared with the physical, material and military strength of any of the much smaller West-European states.

Can we save ourselves from the impending conflict with these imperialist countries? May we hope that the internal antagonisms and conflicts between the thriving imperialist countries of the West and the thriving imperialist countries of the East will give us a second respite as they did the first time, when the campaign of the West-European counter-revolution in support of the Russian counter-revolution broke down owing to the antagonisms in the camp of the counter-revolutionaries of the West and the East, in the camp of the Eastern and Western exploiters, in the camp of Japan and the U.S.A.?

I think the reply to this question should be that the issue depends upon too many factors, and that the outcome of the struggle as a whole can be forecast only because in the long run capitalism itself is educating and training the vast majority of the population of the globe for the struggle.

In the last analysis, the outcome of the struggle will be determined by the fact that Russia, India, China, etc., account for the overwhelming majority of the population of the globe. And during the past few years it is this majority that has been drawn into the struggle for emancipation

with extraordinary rapidity, so that in this respect there cannot be the slightest doubt what the final outcome of the world struggle will be. In this sense, the complete victory of socialism is fully and absolutely assured.

But what interests us is not the inevitability of this complete victory of socialism, but the tactics which we, the Russian Communist Party, we, the Russian Soviet Government, should pursue to prevent the West-European counter-revolutionary states from crushing us. To ensure our existence until the next military conflict between the counter-revolutionary imperialist West and the revolutionary and nationalist East, between the most civilised countries of the world and the Orientally backward countries which, however, comprise the majority, this majority must become civilised. We, too, lack enough civilisation to enable us to pass straight on to socialism, although we do have the political requisites for it. We should adopt the following tactics, or pursue the following policy, to save ourselves.

We must strive to build up a state in which the workers retain the leadership of the peasants, in which they retain the confidence of the peasants, and by exercising the greatest economy remove every trace of extravagance from our social relations.

We must reduce our state apparatus to the utmost degree of economy. We must banish from it all traces of extravagance, of which so much has been left over from tsarist Russia, from its bureaucratic capitalist state machine.

Will not this be a reign of peasant limitations?

No. If we see to it that the working class retains its leadership over the peasantry, we shall be able, by exercising the greatest possible thrift in the economic life of our state, to use every saving we make to develop our large-scale machine industry, to develop electrification, the hydraulic extraction of peat, to complete the Volkhov Power Project, etc.

In this, and in this alone, lies our hope. Only when we have done this shall we, speaking figuratively, be able to change horses, to change from the peasant, muzhik horse of poverty, from the horse of an economy designed for a ruined peasant country, to the horse which the proletariat

is seeking and must seek—the horse of large-scale machine industry, of electrification, of the Volkhov Power Station, etc.

That is how I link up in my mind the general plan of our work, of our policy, of our tactics, of our strategy, with the functions of the reorganised Workers' and Peasants' Inspection. This is what, in my opinion, justifies the exceptional care, the exceptional attention that we must devote to the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection in raising it to an exceptionally high level, in giving it a leadership with Central Committee rights, etc., etc.

And this justification is that only by thoroughly purging our government machine, by reducing to the utmost everything that is not absolutely essential in it, shall we be certain of being able to keep going. Moreover, we shall be able to keep going not on the level of a small-peasant country, not on the level of universal limitation, but on a level steadily advancing to large-scale machine industry.

These are the lofty tasks that I dream of for our Workers' and Peasants' Inspection. That is why I am planning for it the amalgamation of the most authoritative Party body with an "ordinary" People's Commissariat.

March 2, 1923

Pravda No. 49,
March 4, 1923
Signed: *N. Lenin*

Collected Works, Vol. 33,
pp. 498-502

APPENDIX

LENIN'S MARGINAL NOTES ON A LETTER FROM G. V. CHICHERIN

(March 14, 1922)

To Comrade Lenin

March 10, 1922

Esteemed Vladimir Ilyich,

I earnestly request you to read through the proposals made below and let me have your instructions. We have to put forward "a broad pacifist programme", that is one of the most important elements of our forthcoming act; we have not, however, got one. We have only the separate, fragmentary points in the first directives of the Central Committee. I am here making a first attempt to approach the task.

The chief difficulty is that the present international political and economic forms serve as permanent fig-leaves covering the predatory acts of the imperialists; in particular, these forms serve as a weapon against us. The League of Nations is simply a tool of the Entente that has already been used against us. You have yourself pointed out that arbitration between the bourgeois and Soviet governments is impossible; nevertheless arbitration is an indispensable weapon in the pacifist arsenal. The internationalisation of the Chinese Eastern Railway is a euphemism for its alienation from us and from China and its seizure by the Entente. A foreign bank of issue in Russia and the introduction of the dollar into Russia, like the introduction of a universal single gold unit in general, would be the most effective weapon for complete economic bondage to America.

We have to introduce something new into the customary modern international forms to prevent those forms being turned into a tool of imperialism. This new something is provided by our experience and our creative activity as well as by the creative action of life itself in

the process of the growing ruin and break-up of the imperialist world. The world war has resulted in the intensification of the liberation movement of all oppressed and colonial peoples. World states are coming undone at the seams. Our international programme must bring all oppressed colonial peoples into the international scheme. The right of all peoples to secession or to home rule must be recognised. The African Conference of 1885 resulted in the horrors of the Belgian Congo, because the European powers at that conference indulged in philanthropy towards the Negroes and that philanthropy turned out to be a fig-leaf covering the most barbaric exploitation. The novelty of our international scheme must be that the Negro and all other colonial

1) true!

peoples participate on an equal footing with the European peoples in conferences and commissions and have the right to prevent interference in their internal affairs.

2)

Another novelty is the obligatory participation of working-class organisations. The demand for trade unions to take part in a future European congress was very popular in British working-class literature during the world war. We have actually realised this by including three members of the Central Council of Trade Unions in our delegation. We must lay down that one-third of the votes in the international organisation we are going to propose should belong to the working-class organisations represented in each delegation. These two novelties, however, are not sufficient to protect the oppressed peoples and countries from the domination of the imperialists because the upper stratum of the colonial peoples may well be puppets in the same way as treacherous labour leaders are. The inclusion of these two opens up the way for future struggles. Working-class organisations will be confronted with the task of struggling for the liberation of the colonial peoples, for aid to Soviet power and against imperialist depredation. The leaders, however, will try to betray them. Therefore another thing to be established is the principle of non-intervention on the part of international conferences and congresses in the internal affairs of various peoples.

3)

Voluntary co-operation and aid for the weak on the part of the strong must be applied without subordinating the former to the latter.

As a result we have a very bold and completely new proposal—A WORLD CONGRESS with all peoples of the world participating on a completely equal footing.

on the basis of the declaration of the right to self-determination, the right to complete secession or home rule for all oppressed peoples, and also with the participation of working-class organisations to the extent of one-third of the entire congress. The purpose of the congress will not be compulsion of the minority but complete agreement. The congress will help by its moral authority. In practice it will set up technical commissions for the

implementation of our extensive economic programme of world-wide reconstruction.

All the projects for a League of Nations or Association of Nations contain only two types of proposals concerning methods of compulsion to ensure the fulfilment of League decisions—either the establishment of composite armies with contingents from all states or the investment of a punitive mandate in a certain power or several such powers. In the first case we would have something incompetent because a composite army made up of contingents from numerous countries is of no use. In the second case the League of Nations or Association of Nations is nothing but an excuse to justify fresh conquests by the more influential powers. And so it is essential to eliminate completely the element of compulsion or punitive expeditions and leave to the World Congress only its moral authority, allowing it to be an arena for discussions aimed at reaching agreement. The prevention of war is a matter for arbitration. There are two types of arbitration—the voluntary appeal of the two parties to an arbiter, to the Hague Tribunal for instance—in such cases the decision of the arbiter is binding—or the second method, an example of which is to be found in the article on arbitration contained in the treaty between Great Britain and the United States according to which, in the event of there being a danger of war, special commissions of conciliation are set up to which the two parties must appeal but whose decision is merely advisory although for a definite period, for instance a year, the proceedings of the commission continue; this second method has as its purpose the postponement of the beginning of military action to enable the passions of both parties to subside in the legally established interval and lessen the conflict. In the first case appeal to the arbiter is not obligatory but decisions are binding. In the second case appeal to the arbiter is obligatory but decisions are not binding, and the parties are bound only for the legally established period.

At the present moment we cannot avoid one of these alternatives. The proposed World Congress could take

4))

)) exactly

correct!

over the Hague Tribunal with its advisory arbitration and other services. We shall consider that the only court of arbitration between a capitalist state and the Soviet state can be that in which (5) an equal number of members is appointed by each party

5) so that half the members will be imperialists and half will be Communists. At the same time we shall propose a general reduction of (6)

6) armaments based on those theses we have established with the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic; developing the traditions of the Hague and Geneva Conventions we shall propose adding a number of prohibi-

7) tions to the rules of war—the abolition of submarines, chemical gases, mortars, flame-throwers and armed air battles.

8) The technical commissions set up by the World Congress will guide the implementation of a broad programme of world-wide rehabilitation. This programme will not be imposed by force. It will be a voluntary proposal that appeals to the advantage of every participant. Aid will be afforded the weak. In this way world

9) railways, river and sea routes must be laid down. The internationalisation of those routes will be a matter of gradual development since the compulsion of those who resist will not be allowed. International technical commissions will propose to individual countries economic and technical aid for the creation of super-main lines, for the regulation of traffic on international rivers, for the use of international harbours and for the technical improvement of world sea routes. We shall propose that the capital of the advanced countries be used to build a

10) super-main line London-Moscow-Vladivostok (Peking)

and we shall explain that it will open up the incalculable wealth of Siberia for the use of all. In general, aid from the strong for the weak will be the basic principle of world rehabilitation which must be based on economic geography and the planned distribution of resources. A world gold unit can make its appearance only as a result of the improvement of the economically weak countries with the aid of the strong; this improvement is to the interest of all since world ruin affects the strong countries as well, giving rise to unparalleled unemployment, even in America. The strong, by helping the weak, are opening up for themselves markets and

sources of raw materials. Proceeding from these premises we shall propose the planned distribution of the gold that is at the moment lying idle in the vaults of the American banks. This planned distribution of gold in all countries must be combined with the planned distribution of orders, trade, supplies of deficient materials, in general, with all-round economic aid for the ruined countries. This aid may take the form of loans, since under

11)

a planned economy the return of the money would begin in a few years. Under this heading we place the Barter Institute plan (Keynes), or the Zentralstelle, or national trade centres. If Germany opposes us by a single Zentralstelle in place of individual merchants it will be bad for us since it would be a means of imposing bad goods on us at high prices. If, however, the Zentralstellen are instruments for the planned, world-wide distribution of essential commodities and a means of rendering aid to weak countries by the strong, they would be essential components of an extensive programme of economic reconstruction. The grain sent to us by America is the beginning of the international distribution of food. Within the Entente there was a partially planned distribution of fuel during the war; one of the chief elements of the broad programme should be the systematic distribution of oil and coal, but in this case, too, the element of compulsion and repression must be eliminated. The international technical commissions must elaborate, in very general outline, a programme for the planned distribution of fuel and energy resources. All these points, taken together, provide a picture of what is theoretically possible under the bourgeois system, but which in historically conditioned reality will come up against national egoism and the predatory acts of the capitalist oligarchy.

12)

13)

With Communist greetings,
Georgi Chicherin

LETTER TO G. V. CHICHERIN

March 14, 1922

Comrade Chicherin,

I have read your letter of March 10. It seems to me that you have yourself outlined the pacifist programme excellently in that letter.

The great thing is to pronounce both the programme and our commercial proposals clearly and loudly *before* the break-up (if "they" make for an early break-up).

You and our delegation have the skill to do this.

In my opinion you already have about thirteen points (I am sending my marginal notes to your letter); they are excellent.

Everyone will be intrigued when we say: "We have an extensive and complete programme!" If they do not let us announce it we shall *print* it with a protest.

Everywhere there is a "tiny" proviso: we, the Communists, be it known, have *our own* communist programme (Third International) *but* deem it our duty as *merchants to support* (even if there is only one chance in ten thousand) the *pacifists in the other*, i.e., the bourgeois, camp (considering the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals as *belonging to that camp*).

That will be venomous and "benign" and will help demoralise the enemy.

Using this tactics we shall win *even* if we are unsuccessful at Genoa. *We shall not make* a deal that is not to our advantage.

With Communist greetings,

Yours,

Lenin

March 14.

P.S.

Comrade Chicherin,

Why should we not be venomous (and "benign") in another way as well?

By proposing an abolition of *all* war debts (§14) and a *re-examination* (on the basis of our thirteen points) of the Versailles and *all* war treaties (§15),

not by suppressing the minority by the voting power of the majority, but on the basis of *concord*, because we who are present *here* in the capacity of merchants, *cannot* put forward *here* any other principle than that of commerce. We do not want to secure a majority vote over the United States; we are merchants and want to *persuade* that country!! *Let the question be put to all* countries and an *attempt made to persuade* those that are not in agreement. Benign and unacceptable to the bourgeoisie. We shall disgrace them and humiliate them "in a benign manner".

Variation: the subordination of the minority of countries (by population) to the majority may be proposed *separately* inside each of the two camps, bourgeois and Soviet (that which recognises private property and that which does not).

Put forward both the project and the variation.

*Les rieurs seront avec nous!**

P.P.S. Make an exception for small shareholders, *provided* it can be proved that they are not fictitious but really small, working shareholders.

First published in 1959
in *Lenin Miscellany XXXVI*

Published according to the
text of the *Miscellany*

* The laughers will be on our side.—*Ed.*

N O T E S

¹ The Congress opened at Smolny at 10.45 p.m. on October 25 (November 7), 1917; Lenin's manifesto "To Workers, Soldiers and Peasants!" and the decrees on peace and on the land were adopted, and the Council of People's Commissars (the Soviet Government) was formed. Lenin was elected Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars. p. 11

² The People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs published the secret treaties of Russia and some other countries in December 1917 and early in 1918, following a decision of the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets. On the initiative of N. G. Markin, a Bolshevik who had formerly served in the Baltic Fleet, over a hundred treaties and other secret documents of the tsarist and Provisional governments of Russia were removed from the archives, deciphered and published. They first appeared in newspapers and were later issued in nine volumes. Among them were a number of Austro-Hungarian, German, Italian, French, British and other documents.

The publication of the secret treaties was important in revealing the imperialist nature of the First World War. p. 13

³ This refers to the bourgeois Provisional Government formed as a result of the bourgeois-democratic revolution; it was in power from February to October 25, 1917. The Provisional Government continued the reactionary foreign policy of the tsarist autocracy, protecting the interests of the bourgeoisie and the landowners. p. 13

⁴ Chartism was the mass revolutionary movement of English workers in the nineteenth century. The Charter, from which the movement got its name, contained the political demands of the movement. Most of those participating in the movement had immature and utopian political views; this weakened the movement which, in general, had no clear-cut programme and tactics. Although it was defeated, the Chartist movement is important in the history of the British and international working-class movement. p. 13

⁵ The German Reichstag adopted the *Anti-Socialist Law* in 1878 as proposed by Bismarck. The law prohibited Social-Democratic

organisations and activities, and the publication of Social-Democratic journals, newspapers and propaganda literature. Active German Social-Democrats suffered repressions under this law; nevertheless, the Party continued to work under illegal conditions and greatly increased its influence among the workers; at the Reichstag elections in 1890, Social-Democratic candidates obtained almost a million and a half votes. That year the law was annulled. p. 14

⁶ *The Constituent Assembly* was convened on January 5, 1918, although elections to it had, in the main, been held before the October Revolution. The elections were organised by commissions dominated by reactionary bourgeois parties which, therefore, obtained a majority in the Assembly. This led to the policy pursued by the counter-revolutionary part of the Constituent Assembly contradicting the will of the majority of the people as expressed in the establishment of Soviet power and in its decrees. The Constituent Assembly refused to discuss the Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People submitted to it by the Bolsheviks and to approve the decrees on peace and on the land and on the transfer of power to the Soviets adopted by the Second Congress of Soviets.

The Bolsheviks read out the Declaration and then walked out of the Assembly which had clearly displayed its hostility to the interests of the working people. In January 1918 the Constituent Assembly was dissolved by a decree of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee.

p. 14

⁷ This Manifesto was adopted by the Petrograd Soviet on March 14 (27), 1917, and published in the chief newspapers the next day. The Manifesto "To the Peoples of the Whole World" said in part: "We call upon you to overthrow your semi-autocratic system in the same way as the Russian people have shaken off their tsarist autocracy, and to refuse to serve as an instrument of conquest and violence in the hands of kings, landowners and bankers." The Manifesto, adopted under pressure from the revolutionary masses who demanded that the war be stopped, called on the working people of the belligerent countries to take action for peace. It did not, however, expose the annexationist character of the war and did not propose any practical measures in the struggle for peace; in reality it justified the continuation of the imperialist war by the bourgeois Provisional Government.

p. 15

⁸ The agenda of this Congress was the following: the current situation and the question of power, the activities of the Central Navy Committee, reforms in the Navy Department, and others. p. 22

⁹ Peace negotiations between Soviet Russia and Germany began in Brest-Litovsk on November 20 (December 3), 1917, and on November 22 (December 5) a preliminary agreement was reached on the cessation of hostilities for ten days; on December 2 (15) an agreement on a 28-day armistice was signed; it was to last from December 4 (17), 1917 to January 1 (14), 1918 and to be renewed automatically unless one of the sides gave seven days notice of its denuncia-

tion. On the insistence of the Soviet Government, the Germans undertook not to transfer troops from the Eastern to the Western front.

p. 24

¹⁰ Lenin introduced the Declaration at a meeting of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee on January 3 (16), 1918; it was adopted unanimously with some slight changes to Lenin's original text. On January 12 (25), 1918, the Declaration was approved by the Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets and was later included as the first section in the Constitution of the R.S.F.S.R. approved by the Fifth All-Russia Congress of Soviets on July 10, 1918. p. 25

¹¹ The Finnish Diet approved the Declaration of Finland's independence on December 6 (19), 1917. On December 18 (31) the head of the Finnish Government Svinhufvud addressed a request to Lenin as Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars to recognise Finland's independence. That same day the Soviet Government acceded to Finland's request and was thus the first country to recognise independent Finland. The All-Russia Central Executive Committee approved the decision of the Council of People's Commissars and on December 22, 1917 (January 4, 1918) adopted the "Declaration of the Revolutionary Government on the Recognition of Finland's Independence". p. 26

¹² The People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, in a note to the Persian chargé d'affaires dated December 19, 1917 (January 1, 1918), proposed that negotiations be immediately opened for the withdrawal of Russian troops from Persia. All Russian troops were withdrawn from Persia by March 1918. p. 26

¹³ The Decree on Turkish Armenia was discussed by the Council of People's Commissars on December 23, 1917 (January 5, 1918), approved by the Council on December 29, 1917 (January 11, 1918) and published in *Pravda* (No. 227) on December 31, 1917 (January 13, 1918). The inhabitants of Turkish Armenia, which had been occupied by Russian troops during the First World War, were granted the right to self-determination, up to and including complete independence. In February 1918, Turkish troops again seized Turkish Armenia, which prevented the people from exercising the right to self-determination. p. 26

¹⁴ This article marked the opening of the press campaign in favour of concluding peace with Germany. The issue was a very serious one and a furious discussion was waged around it. Peace negotiations opened in Brest-Litovsk on December 9 (22), 1917; the delegation of the German bloc rejected the peace proposals of the Soviet Government and on January 5 (18), 1918 offered Soviet Russia harsh terms that amounted to the plunder of the country; under these terms Poland, Lithuania, part of Latvia, Estonia and Byelorussia went to the Germans. The Soviet Government temporarily broke off negotiations and recalled its delegation to Petrograd for consultations.

Lenin launched a determined struggle against the "Left Communists" and against Trotsky. On January 8 (21) 1918, he spoke in defence of his theses on the question of the immediate conclusion of a separate and annexationist peace at a meeting of members of the Central Committee of the Party and Bolshevik delegates to the Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets. Questions of war and peace were discussed at meetings of the Central Committee on January 24, and February 1, 3, 18, 22, 23 and 24, 1918. To prevent the break-down of the peace negotiations and put a stop to the adventurous policy of Trotsky and the "Left Communists", Lenin got a decision passed by the Central Committee to keep the negotiations going as long as possible and sign a peace treaty if the Germans presented an ultimatum. The German ultimatum of February 9, 1918, demanded that the Soviet delegation accept the terms offered on January 18, but Trotsky, who at that time was head of the Soviet delegation, ignored the C.C. decision and, in direct contravention of Lenin's instructions, refused to sign. This was treason, which the German imperialists took immediate advantage of.

On February 18, 1918, German troops broke the armistice terms and launched an offensive along the whole Russo-German front. That same day the Central Committee of the Party, on Lenin's proposal, adopted a decision to sign the terms the Germans offered. On February 22, however, the German imperialists presented a new ultimatum containing even harsher peace terms; the German imperialists claimed all the Baltic area and demanded that the towns of Kars, Batumi and Ardagan be handed over to Turkey; the ultimatum further required the withdrawal of the troops still remaining in Finland and the Ukraine, the conclusion of peace with the bourgeois-nationalist Ukrainian Central Rada and the demobilisation of the army. The Soviet Republic was required to pay Germany heavy indemnities.

On February 23 the Central Committee of the Party, by a majority vote, adopted Lenin's proposal to sign the peace treaty; on March 1, 1918, negotiations were resumed. The peace treaty was signed on March 3 and ratified by the Fourth (Extraordinary) All-Russia Congress of Soviets on March 15. In November 1918 the German revolution swept away the monarchist regime and on November 13, the All-Russia Central Executive Committee denounced the unjust, annexationist Treaty of Brest-Litovsk.

In this present article Lenin made use of the documents of the conference of Central Committee members and Bolshevik delegates to the Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets held on January 21, 1918.

p. 28

¹⁵ The Decree of the Council of People's Commissars on the organisation of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, dated January 28, was published in the newspaper *Znamya Truda* (Banner of Labour) on January 31 and in *Pravda* and *Izvestia* on February 1, 1918; the Decree was signed by V. Ulyanov (Lenin) as Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars.

p. 29

¹⁶ *The Fundamental Law on the Socialisation of the Land* was discussed and parts of it approved on January 31 by the Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets. In its final form it was approved by the All-Russia Central Executive Committee on February 9, and published in *Izvestia* No. 28 on February 19, 1918. p. 31

¹⁷ On June 18, 1917, Kerensky, head of the Provisional Government, issued an order to launch an offensive on the South-Western front. The Russian bourgeoisie and the obedient Provisional Government were in favour of continuing the war. p. 32

¹⁸ *The Duma* was a Russian representative body with very limited legislative functions. The bourgeois-democratic revolution that began in January 1905 compelled the tsarist government to make concessions and convene the Duma. The Bolsheviks boycotted the elections to the First Duma (January-February 1906) anticipating the further growth of the revolution.

By the autumn of 1906 they changed their tactics and took part in the elections to the Second Duma, because the revolution was on the decline. After the defeat of the revolution, when a period of reaction and terror set in, the Bolsheviks participated in the elections to the Third Duma in order to use its rostrum to expose the policy of tsarism and conduct revolutionary agitation. p. 34

¹⁹ *The All-Russia Democratic Conference* was held in Petrograd from September 27 to October 5, 1917. The conference was attended by representatives of socialist parties, Soviets, trade unions, Zemstvos, commercial and industrial circles and army units. The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries were dominant among the delegates. The Bolsheviks attended the conference for the purpose of exposing the plans of the conciliators, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, who hoped to stem the revolution and turn Russia on to the path of bourgeois parliamentarism. p. 34

²⁰ "Opportunists of October" refers to Zinoviev and Kamenev, who opposed the insurrection in October 1917 and betrayed the Central Committee resolution on the armed uprising. Lenin branded them as strike-breakers and demanded their expulsion from the Party in his "Letter to the Members of the Bolshevik Party" and "Letter to the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P." p. 35

²¹ *Novy Luch* (New Ray)—organ of the Central Committee of the Mensheviks, the opportunist trend among Russian Social-Democrats. The Mensheviks were the actual vehicles of bourgeois influence among the working class. After the October Socialist Revolution they became an open counter-revolutionary party, the organisers of and participants in conspiracies and revolts against Soviet power. *Novy Luch* was published in Petrograd under the editorship of Dan, Martov and Martynov from December 14, 1917, until it was suppressed in June 1918.

Dyelo Naroda (People's Cause)—organ of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, a petty-bourgeois party founded in 1902. It was published

in Petrograd and later in Samara and Moscow with intervals from March 1917 to March 1919, sometimes changing its title.

Novaya Zhizn (New Life)—a newspaper published from April 1917 in Petrograd, around which a Menshevik group was formed. After the October Revolution the group adopted a position hostile to Soviet power. The paper was suppressed in July 1918. p. 37

²² *The Moscow Regional Bureau of the R.S.D.L.P.* in 1917 and early 1918 was the central body of the Party organisations of the Central Industrial Area of Russia, which included the following gubernias: Moscow, Yaroslavl, Tver, Kostroma, Vladimir, Voronezh, Smolensk, Nizhni-Novgorod, Tula, Ryazan, Tambov, Kaluga and Orel. At the time of the Party struggle for the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk the leadership in the Moscow Bureau was temporarily in the hands of the "Left Communists" (Bukharin, Osinsky, Lomov, Stukov, Sapronov, Mantsev, Yakovleva and others). p. 39

²³ *The Fourth (Extraordinary) All-Russia Congress of Soviets* was held in Moscow on March 14, 15 and 16, 1918. The Congress was called to decide on the ratification of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. Lenin delivered a report in favour of ratification, and the Left Socialist-Revolutionary Kamkov, against it. A roll-call vote was held and Lenin's motion to ratify the treaty was adopted with 784 delegates for, 261 against and 115 abstaining; among those abstaining were the "Left Communists" who, contrary to the decision of the Central Committee, read a special declaration at the Congress. p. 48

²⁴ This refers to the workers' and soldiers' demonstrations on April 20 and 21, 1917, in Petrograd, Moscow and other cities demanding peace and opposing the continuation of the imperialist war. The April demonstrations marked the beginning of the crisis of the bourgeois Provisional Government. p. 50

²⁵ This refers to the peaceful demonstrations of Petrograd workers on July 3 and 4, 1917, that were fired on by troops and dispersed. Following these events state power passed fully into the hands of the counter-revolutionary Provisional Government. The peaceful period of the revolution had come to an end, and the Bolsheviks were confronted with the task of preparing an armed uprising to overthrow the Provisional Government. p. 50

²⁶ A counter-revolutionary revolt was raised by General Kornilov in August and September 1917. In response to an appeal by the Bolsheviks the masses rose against Kornilov and crushed the revolt. p. 50

²⁷ This statement was made by Dubasov, an army officer, in the Petrograd Soviet on October 5, 1917, during the discussion following the report on the Democratic Conference. p. 59

²⁸ These "theses" were discussed at a joint meeting of members of the Central Committee of the Party and the "Left Communists" on April 4, 1918. In the theses the "Left Communists" tried to

justify their struggle against the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and against Lenin's plan for socialist construction. p. 69

²⁹ The Second All-Ukraine Congress of Soviets was held in Ekaterinoslav (now Dnepropetrovsk) from March 17 to March 20, 1918. The Congress declared the independence of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic and the inviolability of fraternal relations between Soviet republics, and called upon the workers and peasants of the Ukraine to fight resolutely against the German occupants. The "Left Communists" tried to use the All-Ukraine Congress of Soviets for their own provocative aims; they put forward the motion that the Congress condemn the conclusion of the Brest-Litovsk peace by the Russian Soviet Government, a motion that amounted to a split. By a majority of 408 against 308 the Congress adopted the Bolshevik resolution on war and peace and by a majority of 420 against 290 rejected the motion on the non-recognition of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. p. 70

³⁰ *Kommunist*—the factional journal of the "Left Communists" published in Moscow from April 20 to June 1918; four issues appeared. p. 72

³¹ Chapter XXV of Part Six of the book *On War* by Karl von Clausewitz deals with withdrawal into the interior of the country as a means of defence. p. 76

³² On the conclusion of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, the Soviet Government began to elaborate plans for the development of commercial relations with capitalist countries. The main purpose was to provide the leading branches of industry and agriculture with means of production; the development of economic relations with the U.S.A. was considered of great importance. The Foreign Trade Commission of the Committee on Economic Policy of the Supreme Economic Council elaborated a plan (May 12, 1918) for the development of economic relations under which goods imported from the U.S.A. were to be paid for by granting American businessmen concessions on certain terms. The Soviet Government also attempted to establish economic relations with other countries. Plans for the development of foreign trade, however, were frustrated by the Entente which launched armed intervention against the Soviet Union and put into effect an economic blockade. p. 78

³³ On July 6, 1918, the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries organised the assassination of Mirbach, the German Ambassador, for the purpose of preventing the implementation of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and inciting war between Soviet Russia and Germany. Because of the assassination, the German Government demanded that a battalion of German soldiers be quartered in Moscow to guard the embassy. A meeting of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee was called on July 15; it approved the statement issued by Lenin as Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars refusing to accede to the demand of the German Government. The firm posi-

tion adopted by the Soviet Government prevented the collapse of
the peace treaty. p. 79

³⁴ The counter-revolutionary mutiny of the Czechoslovak Army Corps was organised by the imperialists of the Entente with the participation of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries. The Provisional Government formed the Corps in 1917 from Czech and Slovak prisoners of war to fight against the Germans. After the October Revolution the Corps was used by Russian counter-revolutionaries and the British and French imperialists to fight against Soviet power. In May 1918, the officers commanding the Corps succeeded in persuading some of the Czech and Slovak soldiers to revolt. Assisted by the Corps the whiteguards seized the Volgaside area, the Urals and then Siberia. A large number of the Czech and Slovak soldiers were not deceived by the propaganda of their officers, twelve thousand of them fighting in the ranks of the Red Army.

The Volgaside was liberated by the Red Army in October 1918. The counter-revolutionary offensive of the Czechoslovak Army Corps was completely defeated at the same time as Kolchak (at the end of 1919). p. 81

³⁵ British, French and American interventionists landed in Murmansk in March 1918; in July they captured Onega and in August entered Archangel where a counter-revolutionary revolt was organised and the whiteguard "Government of the North Russia" established. The Northern Front, consisting of the 6th and 7th Armies, was created to check the advance of the interventionists. The whiteguard and interventionist troops were finally defeated in this area early in 1920. p. 81

³⁶ *The Fifth All-Russia Congress of Soviets* opened on July 4, 1918; Lenin delivered the report on the work of the Council of People's Commissars and Sverdlov on the work of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee. At this Congress the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries flatly opposed all Bolshevik proposals. The Congress adopted a resolution approving the home and foreign policy of the Soviet Government. It was interrupted on July 6 by the counter-revolutionary revolt of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and re-opened on July 9. The Congress discussed a report on the food question and on the formation of the Red Army; it also adopted the first Soviet Constitution. p. 82

³⁷ This session was called because of the serious situation in the Soviet Republic which, on account of the foreign intervention and the whiteguard revolts, was cut off from the chief food, fuel and raw material sources. The meeting unanimously adopted a resolution on Lenin's report proposed by the Communist group. p. 85

³⁸ The article referred to was entitled "French Millions" and was published on June 28, 1918 in *Prukopník Svobody* (Banner of Freedom), organ of the Czechoslovak Communist group, which was

published in Moscow in 1918 and 1919. The article was reprinted in full in *Pravda* and in part in *Izvestia* on the same day. p. 86

³⁹ The counter-revolutionary revolt of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries took place in Moscow on July 6, 1918, during the Fifth All-Russia Congress of Soviets and was suppressed that same day. p. 88

⁴⁰ *The Dashnaksutyun*, or *Dashnak Party*—an Armenian bourgeois-nationalist party that was founded in the early nineties of the nineteenth century. It fomented national hatred between peoples and pursued a policy of the national isolation of Armenia, striving to divert the masses from the all-Russia revolutionary movement. From 1918 to 1920 the Dashnaks headed the bourgeois-nationalist government of Armenia and tried to turn the country into an Anglo-French base for intervention against Soviet power. The Dashnak government was overthrown in November 1920 by an insurrection of the Armenian people supported by the Red Army. p. 88

⁴¹ At a meeting of the Baku Soviet on July 25, 1918, the Socialist-Revolutionaries, Mensheviks and Dashnaks, by a small majority, adopted a treacherous decision to appeal to the British imperialists for help (on the pretext of defending Baku from the Turks). A motion by the Bolshevik group that the defence of Baku by their own forces be immediately organised, was rejected. Soviet power in Baku came to an end on July 31, and on August 1 the agents of the Entente, the Socialist-Revolutionaries, Mensheviks and Dashnaks, formed a counter-revolutionary government which was known as the "Dictatorship of the Central Caspian". Shahumyan, Japaridze, Azizbekov, Fioletov, Zevin and others, altogether twenty-six commissars, and some other leaders were arrested in Baku and later shot by the British interventionists with the direct participation of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries. p. 90

⁴² *Cadets*—members of the Constitutional-Democratic Party, the chief liberal-monarchist party of the Russian bourgeoisie. The party was formed in October 1905, its membership including bourgeois elements, Zemstvo officials from the landowning class and bourgeois intellectuals. After the October Revolution the Cadets became the implacable enemies of Soviet power. p. 93

⁴³ The decree was adopted by the All-Russia Central Executive Committee on June 11, 1918; its full name was "Decree on the Organisation of the Village Poor and the Supply to them of Grain, Consumer Goods and Farm Implements". The decree set up Committees of the Poor Peasants that helped strengthen Soviet power in the countryside; the great political significance of the Committees was that they won the middle peasants over to the side of Soviet power. By a decision of the Sixth (Extraordinary) Congress of Soviets, November 9, 1918, the Committees of the Poor Peasants were considered to have fulfilled their mission and were merged with the Soviets, thus ceasing to exist as separate bodies. p. 95

⁴⁴ The whiteguard revolt in Yaroslavl began on July 6, 1918. It was organised by the counter-revolutionary Union for the Defence of the

Fatherland and Freedom which was under the leadership of B. Savinkov, a Right Socialist-Revolutionary. The Yaroslavl revolt, like other whiteguard revolts in this period, was prepared by the imperialists of the Entente with the active participation of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries. The organisation of these revolts was part of the general plan of intervention in Russia. The Yaroslavl revolt was put down by Red Army forces on July 21, 1918.

p. 95

⁴⁵ Under the Decree of the Council of People's Commissars dated June 28, 1918, all big industry was nationalised. p. 96

⁴⁶ *The Decree on Workers' Control in Industry* (Instructions on Workers' Control) was adopted on November 27, 1917, by the All-Russia Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars. It was based on the draft instructions drawn up by Lenin at the end of October. p. 99

⁴⁷ This letter was published by socialist-internationalists in New York and later in pamphlet form as a reprint from the journal; the letter has been reprinted many times in American and West-European publications. p. 102

⁴⁸ *The man in a muffler*—a character in a story of the same name by Anton Chekhov; he was limited in his outlook, and feared all initiative and everything new. p. 109

⁴⁹ *Appeal to Reason*—an American socialist newspaper founded in Kansas in 1895; during the First World War it adopted an internationalist position. p. 110

⁵⁰ At this Congress Lenin spoke on the anniversary of the October Revolution and on the international situation. The Congress unanimously adopted the resolution on the international situation that Lenin had drawn up and which had been approved on October 22, 1918, by a joint meeting of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, the Moscow Soviet, factory committees and trade unions.

The Congress approved an appeal to the governments fighting against Russia to start peace negotiations. p. 117

⁵¹ At the time of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848-49, Tsar Nicholas I sent Russian troops to the aid of the Emperor of Austria-Hungary. p. 125

⁵² This refers to the suppression of the Polish insurrection by tsarist troops, 1863-64. p. 125

⁵³ This refers to the Treaty of Versailles which the Allies imposed on Germany after her defeat in the First World War (1914-18). The Treaty was signed on June 28, 1919, and Germany lost all her former colonies and a considerable part of her own territory; Germany had to pay huge reparations and her armed forces were reduced to a minimum. p. 126

⁵⁴ The Dutch Government suddenly refused the envoy of the R.S.F.S.R. permission to enter Holland although he was already *en route* and

there had been a preliminary agreement on the exchange of diplomatic representatives. p. 127

⁵⁵ On November 5, 1918, the German Government broke off diplomatic relations with the R.S.F.S.R. and expelled the staff of the Soviet Embassy from Berlin on the pretext that official Soviet representatives had been conducting agitation against German state institutions. Diplomatic relations were not resumed until 1922. p. 127

⁵⁶ *Troisième Internationale* (*Third International*)—the weekly newspaper of the French Communists, published in Moscow in 1918-19. p. 128

⁵⁷ This sum represents the tsarist government's debts to the imperialists of Britain, France, the U.S.A., Germany and other countries, being the total amount of the loans received by the tsarist and Provisional governments. A Decree of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee dated February 3, 1918, annulled all foreign loans obtained by the tsarist government and the Provisional Government; this freed the country from bondage to foreign capital. p. 128

⁵⁸ *The Eighth Party Congress* adopted the new Programme of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) that had been drawn up by a Commission under Lenin's chairmanship. The Programme laid down the tasks of the Party for the entire period of transition from capitalism to socialism. During the discussion on the Programme the Congress rejected the anti-Bolshevik views of Bukharin who proposed removing from the Programme the description of pre-monopolist capitalism and simple commodity production; he also opposed the inclusion of the clause on the right of nations to self-determination.

The Congress heard Lenin's report on work in the rural areas and adopted a decision to go over from the policy of neutralising the middle peasant to one of a strong alliance between him and the proletariat, with the latter maintaining the leading role in this alliance. The Congress passed a resolution to found a regular Red Army imbued with a spirit of iron discipline. p. 137

⁵⁹ *The Princes Islands Conference* was planned by Lloyd George and Woodrow Wilson as a conference of representatives of the Entente and of all governments then existing on the territory of Russia to discuss the cessation of hostilities and the restoration of peace in Russia. The Allied powers officially announced the convening of the conference on January 22, 1919. The Soviet Government did not receive an invitation to the conference and learned from foreign press reviews sent out by wireless that the imperialist powers were informing the public that the absence of a reply from the Soviet Government was to be interpreted as a refusal to participate. To counteract this false interpretation of their actions, the Soviet Government on February 4, 1919, sent a note by wireless to the governments of Great Britain, France, Italy, Japan, and the U.S.A. agreeing to begin negotiations immediately and indicating that for

the sake of peace they were willing to make important concessions. The Soviet Government did not deny the possibility that the financial obligations of the tsarist government would be recognised and proposed submitting that question to a special discussion; they also agreed to grant concessions to nationals of the Entente, but of dimensions and on terms such as would not affect the social and economic system of the Soviet Republic. The Soviet Government also agreed to negotiations on questions of territorial concessions. The Soviet declaration put an end to the negotiations game of Entente diplomacy undertaken for purposes of provocation and provided a basis for real, effective negotiations. The Entente governments did not reply to the Soviet Government's note. The whiteguard governments, on instructions from the Entente, announced their refusal to participate and the conference did not take place.

p. 137

⁶⁰ *Spartacus League (Spartakus Bund)* was formed in January 1916 in Germany; among its leaders were Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, Franz Mehring, Clara Zetkin and Wilhelm Pieck. The League conducted revolutionary propaganda among the masses against the imperialist war, and exposed the annexationist policy of German imperialism and the treachery of the Right Social-Democratic leaders. In April 1917 the Spartacists joined the centrist Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany but retained organisational autonomy. After the German Revolution in November 1918, the Spartacists broke away from the Independents and in December of the same year formed the Communist Party of Germany.

p. 142

⁶¹ This article was written in reply to five questions put to Lenin by the United Press Agency. (1) Has the Russian Soviet Republic made any small or big changes in the original government programme of home and foreign policy and in the economic programme, if so, when and in what way? (2) What are the tactics of the Russian Soviet Republic towards Afghanistan, India and other Moslem countries beyond the frontiers of Russia? (3) What political and economic aims do you pursue in respect of the United States and Japan? (4) On what terms would you be willing to conclude peace with Kolchak, Denikin and Mannerheim? (5) What else have you to bring to the notice of the American public? In October 1919 *The Liberator*, an American Left-socialist journal, published an article "A Statement and a Challenge" which contained Lenin's answer to the fifth question, with an editorial comment to the effect that the United Press Agency had distributed Lenin's answers to the press but had omitted the fifth as "pure Bolshevik propaganda".

p. 143

⁶² *The Autonomous Bashkirian Soviet Republic* was formed as a result of an agreement between the central Soviet authorities and the Bashkirian Government. The agreement was approved by the Council of People's Commissars and the All-Russia Central Executive Committee on March 20, 1919, and published in the press on

March 23. According to the agreement the Bashkirian Republic joined the R.S.F.S.R. as a member of the federation. p. 144

⁶³ Japanese, U.S., British and French interventionist troops landed in the Far East in the spring of 1918. Partisan warfare against the interventionists and the whiteguards continued throughout the period of the intervention. The interventionists were finally driven out of the country in October 1922. p. 145

⁶⁴ William Bullitt came to Moscow on the instructions of President Woodrow Wilson for peace talks, which were carried on in March 1919. The Soviet Government introduced a number of amendments and addenda to the proposals put forward by the U.S.A. and Britain, after which a final draft of an agreement was drawn up. The draft agreement envisaged the retention of all governments then existing in Russia on the territory they occupied, the restoration of trade relations, safe transit for the Soviet Government on all railways and the use of all ports belonging to the former Russian Empire, the recognition by the Russian governments of the financial obligations of the former Empire, etc. On the proposal of the Soviet Government, a formula was introduced which said that *immediately* after the conclusion of the agreement (and not after the demobilisation of the Russian army, as the Entente proposed) all foreign troops would be withdrawn from Russia and all military support for the anti-Soviet governments would cease.

The plan put forward by Britain and the U.S.A. amounted to the partitioning of Russia into a number of separate states. Lenin, however, believed it possible to accept such an agreement, since it would end the intervention and give the Soviet Republic a peaceful respite. Lenin proceeded from the knowledge that the counter-revolutionary governments remained in power only with the help of the interventionists and would be swept away by the people when they were withdrawn.

The Soviet proposals were not accepted by the U.S. and British governments because Kolchak's army launched an offensive in the spring of 1919 and they hoped the Soviet Republic would be crushed by armed force. Wilson did not receive Bullitt, and Lloyd George announced in Parliament that he had not authorised anyone to negotiate with the Bolsheviks. p. 145

⁶⁵ On May 7, 1919, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs Chicherin sent a wireless message to Fridtjof Nansen, the famous Arctic explorer and prominent public figure, in reply to Nansen's message to Lenin received by wireless on May 4, 1919. Nansen proposed the organisation of an international commission to aid Russia by supplying food and medicines. He stated that the Entente agreed to support such a commission on the condition that hostilities in Russia ceased. In his message, Chicherin said that the Soviet Government agreed to the plan, but rejected the Entente terms, regarding them as an attempt to preserve the counter-revolutionary whiteguard governments on the outskirts of Russia. The Soviet Government agreed to conduct negotiations on the cessation of

hostilities only together with other questions concerning the end of the intervention and civil war. The Soviet Government's proposal was not answered. p. 145

⁶⁶ This Congress was held in Moscow from November 22 to December 3, 1919. A preliminary conference of members of the Central Committee and a group of Congress delegates was held on November 21 under Lenin's chairmanship. The Congress was attended by 80 delegates from communist organisations in Turkestan, Azerbaijan, Khiva, Bukhara, Kirghizia, Tataria, Chuvashia, Bashkiria, the Caucasus, etc. Lenin delivered a report on the current situation on the first day of the Congress. The Congress discussed the report on the work of the Central Bureau of the Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East, elected a new Bureau and outlined the tasks of Party and government work in the East. p. 152

⁶⁷ The *Constituent Assembly Committee* was the whiteguard-Socialist-Revolutionary government formed in Samara in June 1918. It was disbanded at the end of 1918. p. 154

⁶⁸ At the conference session on December 2, 1919, Lenin submitted a draft resolution on the international situation. It was approved by the conference and announced by Lenin on December 5, in his report to the Seventh All-Russia Congress of Soviets, and was accepted unanimously as a proposal of peace to the Entente countries. The resolution was published in the press on December 6 and handed to representatives of the Entente on December 10. The British, French, U.S., and Italian governments refused to examine the Soviet proposal. p. 165

⁶⁹ The agenda of this Congress was: (1) the reports of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars; (2) the situation at the front; (3) the Communist International; (4) the food situation; (5) the fuel problem; (6) Soviet organisation at the centre and locally; (7) elections to the Central Executive Committee. p. 167

⁷⁰ The session lasted from February 2 to February 7, 1920. The session approved the "Appeal of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee to the Polish People" and ratified the peace treaty with Estonia. p. 183

⁷¹ Lenin read the report published in the Moscow newspapers of January 18, 1920, that the governments of the Entente intended to lift the blockade and sanction trade with Soviet Russia. The decision passed by the Allied Council on January 16, 1920, stressed that these measures did not mean any change in the policy of the Allied governments towards the Soviet Government. p. 184

⁷² The negotiations between Soviet Russia and Estonia began on December 5, 1919. The peace treaty was signed on February 2, 1920, in Yuriev (now Tartu). p. 185

⁷³ The whiteguard officer Oleinikov was carrying documents from S. D. Sazonov in Paris, through Sweden to Yudenich. He sided with the revolution and handed the documents over to the Soviet authorities. The persons mentioned in the documents were: Sazonov, Foreign Minister in the tsarist government and Kolchak's government and the representative of Kolchak and Denikin in Paris; Gulkevich, Kolchak's envoy in Sweden; Bakhmetev, Kolchak's ambassador to Washington; Sukin, head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Omsk; Sablin, Kolchak's chargé d'affaires in London; Knox, an English general, the British Government representative to Kolchak's government. p. 188

⁷⁴ The "Supreme Ruler" referred to was Kolchak. p. 189

⁷⁵ This refers to the Red Cross negotiations on an exchange of prisoners, the return of refugees, etc. p. 191

⁷⁶ On January 28, 1920, the Council of People's Commissars approved the "Declaration of the Council of People's Commissars of the R.S.F.S.R. on the Fundamentals of Soviet Policy in Respect of Poland"; it was dispatched by wireless and published in the Moscow newspapers. On February 2, 1920, the First Session of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, Seventh Convocation, approved an Appeal to the Polish People. This appeal exposed the slander of the imperialist powers to the effect that Soviet Russia intended annexing parts of Poland and stressed the Soviet Government's unwavering effort to achieve peace and establish friendly, good-neighbourly relations with independent Poland. p. 192

⁷⁷ The Autonomous Tatar Soviet Republic was formed on May 27, 1920; the decree of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars on the formation of the republic was signed by Lenin and Kalinin. p. 193

⁷⁸ This passage refers to a decree of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee on the union of the Soviet republics of Russia, the Ukraine, Latvia, Lithuania and Byelorussia for the struggle against armed intervention; the decree was adopted on June 1, 1919; it was approved by the Central Executive Committee of the Ukraine on June 14. p. 194

⁷⁹ The questions were sent to Lenin by wireless through the Berlin representative and the answers were wirelessed back to Berlin, and on February 21, 1920, transmitted to New York. That same evening the paper published Lenin's answers. The text of the answers was also published in the German communist and socialist press. p. 198

⁸⁰ The *Daily Express* special correspondent in Copenhagen asked Lenin to answer four questions. Lenin's answers were received in Copenhagen on February 22 and appeared in the newspaper on the following day. p. 202

⁸¹ This refers to the work of the State Commission for the Electrification of Russia (GOELRO) which was set up in accordance with

Lenin's proposal in February and March 1920 and in fulfilment of a decree of the First Session of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, Seventh Convocation, held from February 2 to February 7, 1920. The plan for the electrification of Russia, elaborated by mid-December on the initiative and under the guidance of Lenin, was a scientifically-based, long-term state plan for the rehabilitation and development of the economy of the Soviet Republic in the course of socialist construction

p. 202

⁸² Lenin's talk with Lincoln Eyre took place in mid-February 1920. The talk lasted over an hour; it was carried on in English, at first in Lenin's workroom and then in his apartment in the Kremlin. The cross-heads are those provided by *The World*.

p. 204

⁸³ Peace negotiations between the Soviet Republic and Latvia and Lithuania began in Moscow in April and May 1920 and ended in the conclusion of treaties—with Lithuania on July 12, 1920, in Moscow, and with Latvia on August 11, 1920, in Riga.

p. 208

⁸⁴ This Congress was opened in the Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow, by Lenin, who made the opening speech; he also delivered the report on the work of the Central Committee of the Party and closed the discussion on the report. The Ninth Congress was called at the time of a peaceful respite and dealt mainly with economic problems. The Congress defeated the anti-Party "democratic centralism" group (Sapronov, Osinsky and others) who, together with Rykov and Tomsky, opposed one-man management and the personal responsibility of executives.

p. 210

⁸⁵ The revolution in Finland began at the end of January 1918 in the southern industrial areas of the country which included such important towns as Helsingfors (now Helsinki) and Vyborg. On January 28, 1918, the Finnish Red Guard occupied Helsingfors, the capital, where a revolutionary government was set up known as the Council of People's Representatives of Finland. Svinhufvud's bourgeois government appealed to the Swedish and German bourgeoisie for assistance. Svinhufvud established himself in the north, formed whiteguard kulak detachments and, with the support of Swedes, Germans and Russian whiteguard officers, began an offensive towards the south. In May, after more than three months of civil war, the workers' revolution was crushed with the aid of a German expeditionary force 20,000 strong.

p. 214

⁸⁶ The Hungarian Soviet Republic was formed on March 21, 1919. In August 1919, Soviet power in Hungary was crushed by the united efforts of the imperialist intervention and internal counter-revolution, aided by the treachery of the Right Social-Democrats.

p. 214

⁸⁷ Soviet-Finnish peace negotiations began on June 12, 1920, in Yuriev (Tartu) and ended on October 14 when a peace treaty was signed.

p. 216

⁸⁸ Poland's agreement to start negotiations was merely a manoeuvre to cover war preparations against the Soviet Republic. In reply to

the Soviet Government's many proposals (December 22, 1919, January 28, February 2 and March 6, 1920), the Polish Government gave its consent only on March 27, 1920, and proposed holding the talks in the town of Borisov, in the vicinity of the front, and ceasing hostilities on that sector only. The Polish Government replied to the Soviet proposal to cease all hostilities and hold the peace negotiations in some neutral country by a refusal in the form of an ultimatum. Having sabotaged the negotiations, the Polish reactionaries launched their war against the Soviet Republic on April 25, 1920. p. 216

⁸⁹ Lenin alludes to the preparations for a military-monarchist *putsch* in Germany. The leader of the German reactionary militarists, Kapp, gave his name to the revolt known as the "Kapp *putsch*"; it was prepared with the obvious complicity of the Social-Democratic government. On March 13, 1920, army units were moved to Berlin and, meeting with no resistance from the government, declared it dissolved and formed a new government. The German working class responded with a general strike and on March 17, under pressure from the working class, Kapp's government fell and state power again passed into the hands of the Social-Democrats. p. 216

⁹⁰ This letter was published in June 1920 in the British Socialist Party's weekly *The Call*, in the Labour Party's *Daily Herald*, in the bourgeois *Manchester Guardian* and other papers. p. 219

⁹¹ These draft theses were published on June 14, 1920, in the journal *Communist International* No. 11 and served as the basis of the work of the commission on the national and colonial questions at the Second Congress of the Comintern. Lenin reported to the Congress on behalf of the commission (see pp. 250-55 of this volume). p. 224

⁹² This conference was called by the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.); it was held from June 10 to June 15, 1920. The conference approved a manifesto *To All Workers of the World*. The manifesto greeted the British, Hungarian, Italian and other workers who had passed a decision to prevent the dispatch of military equipment and troops to aid the reactionary Polish Government that was conducting a war against Soviet Russia. p. 232

⁹³ The eastern frontiers of Poland as delineated in the declaration of the Allied Council on December 8, 1919, followed the line Grodno, Yalovka, Nemirov, Brest-Litovsk, Dorogusk, Ustilug, east of Grubeshov, through Krylov, west of Rawa-Ruska, east of Peremyshl to the Carpathians. This was later known as the "Curzon line". In its peace proposals the Soviet Government was prepared to accept a Polish-Soviet frontier even more easterly than the Curzon line. p. 233

⁹⁴ National Democracy (*Demokracja narodowa*)—the chief reactionary nationalist party of the Polish landowners and bourgeoisie, that

was closely bound up with the Catholic church; it was founded in 1897.

The National-Democrats were extremely hostile to the October Socialist Revolution and the Soviet state, but, following their traditional anti-German position, did not always support Poland's anti-Soviet foreign policy.

p. 237

⁹⁵ *The Octobrists* were members of the Party of October the Seventeenth formed in Russia after the publication of the tsar's manifesto of that date.

The manifesto promised to introduce "civil liberties" and "legislative organisations". Actually it was a political manoeuvre on the part of the autocracy to gain time and split the forces of the revolution.

The Octobrists were a counter-revolutionary party protecting the interests of the big bourgeoisie and the landowners who ran their estates on capitalist lines. The Octobrists gave their full support to the home and foreign policy of the tsarist government.

p. 237

⁹⁶ This Congress opened in Petrograd but subsequent sessions were held in Moscow. It was attended by over 200 delegates representing the working-class organisations of 37 countries. In addition to representatives of Communist parties and organisations (from 31 countries) the Congress was attended by delegates from the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany, the Socialist parties of Italy and France, the Industrial Workers of the World (Australia, Britain, Ireland), the Spanish National Confederation of Labour and others. Lenin spoke on the international situation, the fundamental tasks of the Communist International and other questions. Lenin's theses on the basic tasks of the Second Congress of the Communist International, the national and colonial questions, and the agrarian question, and his 21 conditions of admission to the Communist International were adopted as a decision of the Congress. The Congress passed a resolution exposing the Entente as the real instigators of Polish intervention and called upon the world working class to defend Soviet Russia.

The Second Congress laid down the basic programme, organisational principles, strategy and tactics of the Communist International.

p. 240

⁹⁷ *The Two-and-a-Half International*, also known as the Vienna International—the International Working Union of Socialist Parties, to give its official title, was formed in Vienna in February 1921 at a conference of centrist parties and groups who had been forced to make a formal break with the bankrupt Second International under pressure from the masses. It was joined by centrist parties and groups from Austria, Britain, Germany, France, the U.S.A. and other countries. The leaders of the Two-and-a-Half International actually continued the policy of the opportunist Second International under cover of revolutionary phrases. In words they recognised the October Socialist Revolution and the

dictatorship of the proletariat but were actually hostile to Soviet power and the Third, Communist International; they sabotaged united front tactics. In 1923, when the revolutionary movement began to subside, the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals merged following a decision taken at the Hamburg Unity Congress in May 1923. p. 248

⁹⁸ President Wilson's "Fourteen Points" were peace terms outlined in his message to the Congress on January 8, 1918. They were: (1) open peace covenants; (2) freedom of the seas; (3) free trade, the removal of tariff barriers; (4) the guaranteed reduction of armaments; (5) the settlement of colonial questions; (6) the settlement of the Russian question; (7) the liberation of Belgium; (8) the return of Alsace and Lorraine to France; (9) the readjustment of the Italian frontier on national principles; (10) autonomy for the peoples of Austria-Hungary; (11) the liberation of the German-occupied territories of Rumania, Serbia and Montenegro, and Serbia to be given free access to the sea; (12) the independent existence of Turkey and autonomy for the non-Turkish parts of the Ottoman Empire; (13) the foundation of an independent Polish state; (14) the establishment of the League of Nations.

This demagogic peace programme, which Wilson tried to counterpose to the Soviet Decree on Peace, reflected the U.S. endeavour to achieve world hegemony by weakening Britain, France and Japan, its allies in the First World War. The expansionist character of the programme was well illustrated in the official commentary to the Fourteen Points, written by Walter Lippmann and F. Cobb and approved by Wilson on October 30, 1918, and a number of other American diplomatic documents dating back to 1918 and 1919. As can be seen from these commentaries U.S. ruling circles understood "the settlement of the Russian question" to mean support for the whiteguard governments, the partitioning of Russia and her subordination to foreign control. p. 248

⁹⁹ *The Commission on the National and Colonial Questions* was set up at the Second Congress of the Communist International from among representatives of the Communist Parties of Soviet Russia, Bulgaria, France, Holland, Germany, Hungary, the U.S.A., India, Persia, China, Korea, Great Britain and others. The Commission worked under the chairmanship of Lenin, whose theses on the national and colonial questions were discussed at the fourth and fifth sessions of the Congress and approved on July 28, 1920. p. 252

¹⁰⁰ *The British Socialist Party* was founded at Manchester in 1911 by the union of the Social-Democratic and other socialist groups. The B.S.P. conducted Marxist propaganda, but its membership was small, its contacts with the masses were weak and it was, therefore, somewhat sectarian. During the First World War a sharp struggle developed between the internationalist trend (Albert Inkpin, Theodore Rothstein, John Maclean, William Gallacher and

others) and the social-chauvinist trend headed by Hyndman. Among the internationalist trend there were some wavering elements who occupied a centrist position on certain questions. The annual conference of the B.S.P. at Salford in April 1916 condemned the social-chauvinist position of Hyndman and his supporters and they left the party.

The B.S.P. welcomed the October Socialist Revolution, and its members played an important part in the British workers' movement for the defence of Soviet Russia against foreign intervention. The B.S.P., together with the Communist Unity Group, was mainly responsible for the foundation of the Communist Party of Great Britain. At the first unity congress, held in 1920, most of the local B.S.P. organisations entered the Communist Party. p. 257

¹⁰¹ *The Basle Manifesto* (1912) against war was unanimously adopted by the Extraordinary Congress of the Second International held in Basle (Switzerland) on November 24 and 25, 1912. The Manifesto spoke of the predatory nature of the imperialist war then in course of preparation and called upon socialists of all countries to fight resolutely against it. The Basle Manifesto repeated the propositions introduced into the resolution on war at the Stuttgart Congress (1907) of the Second International by Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg—in the event of the outbreak of an imperialist war, socialists should take advantage of the economic and political crisis to prepare the socialist revolution. The leaders of the Second International, Kautsky, Vandervelde and others who voted for these propositions, consigned the Basle Manifesto to oblivion when the First World War broke out and took the side of their imperialist governments. p. 257

¹⁰² Lenin wrote this letter to Chicherin in connection with the note sent to the Soviet Government on July 20, 1920, by Lord Curzon, British Foreign Secretary, demanding the cessation of the Red Army's offensive against the Polish whiteguards and threatening, if the demand were not acceded to, that Britain would enter the war on the side of Poland. At the same time the British Government proposed the cessation of the Red Army's offensive against Wrangel's whiteguard army and broke off the trade negotiations between Britain and Soviet Russia held in London in June and July 1920. The Soviet Government's reply, of which Lenin speaks in this letter, was dispatched on July 23, 1920; in its note the Soviet Government stated that on July 22 it had received a proposal from the Polish Government to start negotiations for an armistice and that the Soviet Government had given its consent. At the same time the Soviet Government demanded the unconditional surrender of Wrangel and consented to a conference with the Entente powers. p. 258

¹⁰³ At this conference, held in Moscow from September 22 to September 25, 1920, Lenin delivered the political report of the Central Committee, which dealt chiefly with the question of war and peace with Poland and the organisation of Wrangel's defeat.

A resolution on the terms on which peace would be concluded with Poland was adopted unanimously. The conference approved the Declaration of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee on the concrete terms for peace with Poland, drawn up under the direct guidance of Lenin. p. 260

¹⁰⁴ A *Council of Action* was formed by the British workers in August 1920 in London at a joint meeting of representatives of the Trades Union Congress, the Labour Party Executive and the Parliamentary Labour Party. The purpose of the Council of Action was to oppose Britain taking part in the war against the Soviet Republic. p. 262

¹⁰⁵ Peace with Poland was discussed at a conference on the cessation of hostilities and the establishment of peaceful relations between the R.S.F.S.R. and the Ukrainian S.S.R. on the one hand and Poland on the other. Despite the attempts of the imperialists to prevent it, the conference opened in Minsk on August 17 and continued up to the end of the month. The Soviet Government then agreed to the proposal of the Polish Government to transfer the negotiations from Minsk, which was then within reach of the front, to Riga. On September 21 the conference resumed its work in Riga.

To save the people from the further privations which a severe winter campaign of continued war would have meant for them, the Soviet Government made important concessions to Poland. The negotiations ended on October 12, 1920, and a Treaty on an Armistice and Preliminary Peace Terms Between the R.S.F.S.R. and the Ukrainian S.S.R. on the one side and Poland on the other was signed. p. 262

¹⁰⁶ *Polish Socialist Party* (*Polska Partja Socjalyasticzna*), a petty-bourgeois nationalist party founded in 1892.

People's Party (*Partja Ludowa*)—a petty-bourgeois peasant organisation. p. 263

¹⁰⁷ *The First Congress of the Peoples of the East* was held in Baku from September 1 to September 7, 1920. It was attended by 1,891 delegates representing 37 nationalities. There were 1,273 Communists among the delegates. The Congress expressed solidarity with the resolution of the Second Congress of the Communist International on the national and colonial questions. p. 277

¹⁰⁸ *The Anglo-Soviet trade negotiations* began on May 31, 1920, and the basic terms of an agreement were settled by July 7. At the time of the Soviet-Polish war, however, the British Government broke off negotiations. On November 9, 1920, the R.S.F.S.R. Government sent the British Government a note asking for a direct and speedy answer: was the British Government prepared to start negotiations immediately to reach an economic and political agreement? The British Cabinet met on November 14 and a statement was issued to the press that the majority of the ministers

were in favour of an agreement. On November 18, Lloyd George informed the House of Commons that the basis for an agreement with Russia had been worked out. On November 29, 1920, Krasin was officially handed a draft trade agreement and the negotiations were renewed.

Those hostile to an Anglo-Soviet agreement, however, put a brake on the negotiations and the agreement was not signed until March 16, 1921. Under the agreement the contracting parties undertook not to engage in hostile acts and propaganda against each other; trade relations between Great Britain and Russia were resumed. This agreement marked Britain's *de facto* recognition of Soviet Russia. The agreement with Great Britain, one of the biggest capitalist countries, was an important success for the foreign policy of the Soviet state. p. 280

¹⁰⁹ Information had at that time been received that British forces, with the consent of the Georgian Menshevik Government, intended to occupy Batum. In this connection, G. V. Chicherin, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, sent a wireless message to the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Curzon (November 16, 1920), saying that the Soviet Government regarded the occupation of Batum as an attempt to start a fresh war in the Caucasus, and drew attention to the serious consequences of such an act. p. 280

¹¹⁰ This conference was held on November 20, 21 and 22, 1920. Lenin's speech, delivered on November 21, was published as a pamphlet in Russian, German and French at the end of 1920. p. 283

¹¹¹ In 1920-21 the Soviet Government conducted negotiations with W. Vanderlip on concessions in Kamchatka. p. 288

¹¹² At this Congress Lenin reported on the work of the Council of People's Commissars and spoke to the R.C.P. group at the Congress on questions of home and foreign policy. A resolution approving the work of the government was passed following Lenin's report. The Congress also approved the plan for the electrification of Russia proposed by Lenin and passed Lenin's resolution on the report on electrification. The Congress adopted a number of decisions on economic development and government organisation. p. 291

¹¹³ This refers to Lenin's speech at a meeting of the active membership of the Moscow Party organisation, December 6, 1920. p. 292

¹¹⁴ *The Far Eastern Republic* (F.E.R.) was a democratic state founded under the leadership of the Bolsheviks during the struggle of the working people against the foreign interventionists in the Far East of Russia. It existed from April 6, 1920, to November 14, 1922, when it joined the R.S.F.S.R. The F.E.R. included all the territory from Lake Baikal to the Pacific Ocean. It was a buffer state, bourgeois-democratic in form, that pursued what was actually a Soviet policy; the formation of the F.E.R. was in the

interests of Soviet Russia, which was avoiding an open military conflict with Japanese imperialism, and striving to ensure the country a long respite in the Far East. On May 14, 1920, the Soviet Government recognised the F.E.R. Government as the government of the whole Far Eastern area. F.E.R. policy was guided by the Far Eastern Bureau of the C.C. R.C.P.(B.). p. 293

¹¹⁵ On May 26, 1919, the Allied Council sent a note to Kolchak in which the French, British, Italian, U.S. and Japanese governments announced their readiness to help Kolchak and recognise him as the head of the "All-Russia Government". p. 294

¹¹⁶ The Decree of the Council of People's Commissars, "General Economic and Legal Terms for Concessions", was published on November 23, 1920. p. 304

¹¹⁷ *Sukharevka* was a market on Sukharevskaya (now Kolkhoznaya) Square in Moscow; the name became a synonym for profiteering, especially in food. Shortly before the opening of the Eighth All-Russia Congress of Soviets, Sukharevka Market was closed by order of the Presidium of Moscow Soviet (December 13, 1920). p. 310

¹¹⁸ On August 10, 1920, the French Government officially announced its recognition of Wrangel as the ruler of South Russia. p. 315

¹¹⁹ *The Bukhara People's Soviet Republic* was founded after a popular uprising, supported by the Red Army, had overthrown the rule of the Emir in September 1920.

The Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic was founded in April 1920 following the overthrow of the counter-revolutionary government by an armed uprising of the working people supported by the Red Army.

The Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic was founded in November 1920 after an uprising of the Armenian people, supported by the Red Army, against the bourgeois-nationalist government and the Turkish invaders. p. 317

¹²⁰ This Congress was held in Moscow from February 1 to February 6; it discussed the following points: the work of the Central Committee of the union; economic tasks; labour rates and quotas; the international association of trade unions, etc. p. 323

¹²¹ The plenary meeting of the Moscow Soviet was held jointly with plenary meetings of district Soviets and representatives of factory committees; it discussed the international and internal situation. The meeting unanimously approved a message to the workers, peasants and Red Army units of Moscow City and Moscow Gubernia calling for a struggle against the enemies of Soviet power who were trying to take advantage of temporary food difficulties for counter-revolutionary purposes. p. 330

¹²² The negotiations between the Soviet Government and the Turkish delegation began in Moscow in June 1920, and ended on March

16, 1921 with the signing of a Treaty of Friendship and Fraternity between Soviet Russia and Turkey. p. 330

¹²³ Soviet power was established in Georgia in February 1921 after the overthrow of the counter-revolutionary Menshevik nationalist government by an armed uprising of the working people supported by the Red Army. p. 333

¹²⁴ The Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) summed up the discussion on the trade unions and adopted Lenin's platform by a majority vote. The Congress also adopted the resolutions "The Unity of the Party" and "The Syndicalist and Anarchist Deviation in our Party" tabled by Lenin. Following Lenin's report the Congress passed a decision to substitute a tax in kind for the surplus appropriation system and switch to the New Economic Policy. The Congress unanimously adopted resolutions on the current tasks of the Party in the national question, etc., and on the "Soviet Republic in the Capitalist Encirclement". The Congress approved the policy of the Soviet Government in establishing normal commercial relations between the Soviet Republic and other countries by the conclusion of trade treaties and agreements. The Congress also approved the Decree of the Council of People's Commissars, "General Economic and Legal Terms for Concessions" of November 23, 1920. The Congress resolution on this point said that the protection of the economic and political independence of all the Republic's territory and the protection of the labour of R.S.F.S.R. citizens employed in concession enterprises must be the basic conditions of agreements with any capitalist states or groups. p. 335

¹²⁵ The 21 conditions of admission to the Third International were drawn up by Lenin and adopted by the Second World Congress of the Communist International in August 1920. p. 335

¹²⁶ The Kronstadt counter-revolutionary revolt began on February 28, 1921. The Tenth Congress of the Party sent 300 of its delegates to participate in crushing the revolt; the revolt was put down by March 18. p. 340

¹²⁷ The Tenth Conference was an extraordinary conference that heard and discussed Lenin's report on the tax in kind and adopted Lenin's resolution on the New Economic Policy. p. 341

¹²⁸ This letter was written in connection with the negotiations in Riga in August 1921 between the delegations of the Soviet Government and the American Relief Administration headed by U.S. Secretary of Commerce Hoover. The agreement was signed on August 20, 1921. p. 342

¹²⁹ This note was written in reply to a letter from Chicherin about a note from the British Foreign Office handed to the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs by the British representative. The note was neither addressed nor signed and contained inventions

about the Soviet Government having violated the Anglo-Soviet agreement. p. 343

¹³⁰ In a letter addressed to Lenin on October 15, 1921, Chicherin said that the dissolution by the Soviet Government of the All-Russia Famine Relief Committee for counter-revolutionary activities, the break-down of the negotiations with Urquhart on concessions, etc., had worsened the international position of the R.S.F.S.R. Chicherin proposed measures to improve relations with the capitalist countries. The measures proposed by Chicherin were the withdrawal of Lenin and Trotsky from the Executive Committee of the Communist International and a statement by the Soviet Government, signed by Lenin, Trotsky and Chicherin on the recognition of the debts of the tsarist government; he proposed this because the Brussels Conference, held in October 1921, made the recognition of the debts of former governments a condition for the granting of credits to the Soviet Government for the relief of the famine-stricken. p. 348

¹³¹ *The Ninth All-Russia Congress of Soviets* was held in Moscow from December 23 to December 28, 1921. Following Lenin's report on the home and foreign policy of the Republic the Congress unanimously approved the activities of the Soviet Government for the current year. The Congress adopted a declaration on the international position of the R.S.F.S.R. based on the proposals contained in this letter. The Congress also adopted "Instructions on Questions of Economic Work" drawn up by Lenin and a number of decisions on industry, agriculture and government organisation. p. 349

¹³² *The Washington Conference* was held between November 12, 1921, and February 6, 1922. It was called on the initiative of the U.S.A., with Great Britain, Belgium, Holland, Italy, China, Portugal, the U.S.A., France and Japan participating. Soviet Russia was not invited to the conference. The purpose of the conference was to complete the share-out of colonial possessions and spheres of influence in the Far East and the Pacific Ocean. The most important acts signed at the conference were: the Four-Power Treaty (U.S.A., Britain, Japan, France) on the protection of "territorial rights" in the Pacific, the Nine-Power Treaty on the open-doors principle in China, and the Five-Power Treaty (U.S.A., Britain, Japan, France, Italy) on naval limitations. The Washington Conference was actually a continuation of the imperialist policy laid down in the Treaty of Versailles. The Washington Conference considerably increased the contradictions between the imperialist powers. p. 363

¹³³ This letter is a reply to the question raised on December 23, 1921, by L. Krasin who at that time headed the Soviet Mission in London. Krasin asked for material to be sent him on the situation in Georgia, the policy of the Georgian Revolutionary Committee and the plans for the convening of a Georgian Congress of Soviets.

Krasin needed the material because he had received the resolution adopted by the Second International on November 22, 1921, to which the British Labour Party adhered. The resolution demanded the withdrawal of the Red Army from Georgia, and the holding of a referendum in that country. Krasin also quoted a demand published in the journal *Nation* insisting that the Soviet Government bow to European democratic opinion if it wished to enter into relations with the European democracies. A *Pravda* editorial, "The Recognition of Soviet Power and the Second International" published on December 28, 1921, was written in accordance with Lenin's proposals. p. 365

¹³⁴ *The Cannes resolution* was adopted at a conference of the Allied Council in January 1922 in the town of Cannes, France. This conference decided to call an economic and financial conference in Genoa in February or March 1922. All European countries, including Soviet Russia and the countries defeated in the First World War, were invited.

The Allied Council laid down six conditions necessary for the success of the conference: (1) non-intervention of states in the internal affairs of other nations; (2) a guarantee of the inviolability of the property, rights and profits of foreigners granting credits to any state; (3) the recognition by the governments of countries wishing to obtain credits of all old debts, the restoration of all property belonging to foreigners or compensation for it and also the restoration of a system of laws ensuring the fulfilment of commercial and other deals; (4) the establishment of financial and currency conditions that would guarantee trade; (5) restraint from propaganda hostile to other countries; (6) restraint from any acts against neighbours.

On January 7, 1922, Italy, in the name of the Allied Council, sent the Soviet Government an invitation to participate in the Genoa Conference. The Soviet Government announced its consent in a statement dated January 8, 1922. p. 367

¹³⁵ *The Fifth All-Russia Congress of Metalworkers* was held in Moscow, March 3-7, 1922. Lenin spoke to the Communist group at the Congress on the morning of March 6. p. 368

¹³⁶ *The Genoa International Economic Conference*, April 10-May 19, 1922, was attended by representatives of 29 states, Soviet Russia, Britain, France, Italy, Belgium, Japan and Germany among them. A U.S. representative was present as an observer. At the conference the imperialist powers tried to take advantage of Soviet Russia's economic difficulties to impose on her agreements on terms of bondage. They demanded the payment of all tsarist debts, including pre-war debts, the return of nationalised enterprises to foreigners, etc.

Lenin was nominated chairman of the Soviet delegation at an Extraordinary Session of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee on January 27, 1922. He was unable to go to Genoa, but he actually guided the work of the Soviet delegation, gave instructions

on the framing of questions and on the contents of memoranda submitted in the name of the Soviet Government during the conference. The Soviet delegation rejected the insolent claims of the imperialists and tabled a motion on general disarmament and the annulling of war debts. Owing to the hostile position of Britain and France towards the Soviet Republic, the conference broke down. The discussion of the questions involved was continued at a conference of experts held in The Hague in June and July, 1922. Like the Genoa Conference, it produced no results.

Lenin outlined the basic tasks of Soviet foreign policy, having in mind the Genoa Conference, in his speech to the Communist group at the Metalworkers' Congress and in the political report of the Central Committee to the Eleventh Party Congress (see pp. 366-77 and 378-81 of this volume). p. 368

¹³⁷ This refers to Lenin's speech at a meeting of the First All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies on June 4 (17), 1917, on the attitude to the Provisional Government. p. 375

¹³⁸ This was the last Party Congress attended by Lenin. He made the opening speech, delivered the political report of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.), closed the discussion on the report and made a speech closing the Congress. The Congress summed up the results of the first year of the New Economic Policy and passed resolutions on the role and tasks of the trade unions under the New Economic Policy, financial policy, work in the rural areas and the strengthening of the Party and its new tasks. p. 380

¹³⁹ This refers to the Treaty of Rapallo concluded between the Soviet Government and Germany on April 16, 1922, during the Genoa Conference. The Treaty provided for the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries and a mutual refusal to demand war reparations. The German Government withdrew the claim for the return of enterprises nationalised by the Soviet Government to their former German owners. The conclusion of the Treaty meant the complete collapse of the attempts by the British and French imperialists to create a united front of capitalist countries against Soviet Russia for the purpose of enslaving her economically. p. 384

¹⁴⁰ In September 1922, Edouard Herriot, a prominent French politician, came to Moscow and had unofficial talks with members of the Soviet Government. Herriot expressed the opinions of those French bourgeois circles which, under the influence of the successes of Soviet power in restoring the economy and the failure of the Genoa Conference to impose an unequal treaty on Russia, favoured the normalisation of relations and the development of trade between France and the Soviet Republic. p. 386

¹⁴¹ This refers to the conference on the Middle East that was being prepared by Britain, France and Italy in connection with the failure of British and Greek intervention in Turkey. The imperialist powers at first tried to keep the Soviet Republic out of the

conference altogether, but then, forced to recognise its growing international prestige, stated in a note dated October 7, 1922, that Soviet Russia would be represented only at that part of the conference at which the question of the Black Sea Straits would be discussed. On October 20, 1922, the Soviet Government sent a note of protest and then, on November 2, 1922, sent a new note to the "inviting powers" insisting on the participation of the R.S.F.S.R., the Ukrainian S.S.R. and the Georgian S.S.R. in the entire Middle East conference.

The conference opened in Lausanne on November 20, 1922, and lasted until July 24, 1923. It was attended by Great Britain, France, Italy, Japan, Greece, Rumania, Yugoslavia, Turkey; the discussions on the Black Sea Straits were attended by the R.S.F.S.R., the Ukrainian and the Georgian S.S.R. (represented by a single delegation) and Bulgaria, Albania, Belgium, Holland, Spain, Portugal, Norway and Sweden were invited to the discussions on some points.

The conference ended in the conclusion of a peace treaty between Great Britain, France, Italy, Japan, Greece, Rumania and Yugoslavia on the one hand, and Turkey on the other.

The question of a regime for the Black Sea Straits (Dardanelles and Bosphorus) occupied an important place on the conference agenda. The Soviet delegation put forward the proposals formulated by Lenin in this present interview. These proposals were not accepted. The Convention on the Straits accepted by the Lausanne Conference allowed the free passage of merchant vessels and warships sailing under any flag at any time. The Convention was not ratified by the Soviet Union, since it violated her legitimate rights and did not guarantee the security of the Black Sea countries.

p. 388

¹⁴² Lenin made this speech at the last meeting of the session, which lasted from October 23 to October 31, 1922. p. 393

¹⁴³ The plenary session of Moscow Soviet was held jointly with plenary meetings of all the Moscow district Soviets. This speech, delivered on the evening of November 20, 1922, was Lenin's last public speech. p. 396

¹⁴⁴ This refers to the decision of the National Assembly of the Far Eastern Republic adopted on November 14, 1922, to join the R.S.F.S.R. The report was published in the newspapers on November 15, 1922. p. 396

¹⁴⁵ *The Hague International Peace Congress* (December 10-15, 1922) was called by the Amsterdam Trade Union International under pressure from the masses to struggle against the possibility of a new world war. The Soviet delegation, invited on the demand of revolutionary workers' unions and co-operatives despite the resistance of the opportunist majority at the Congress, outlined the tasks of the proletariat in respect of war according to Lenin's directives. The Congress rejected the programme of action put forward by the Soviet delegation. p. 404

¹⁴⁶ This letter was intended for the Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee on December 18, 1922, which Lenin was unable to attend owing to ill health. The Meeting, opposing the proposals of the capitulators Bukharin and Sokolnikov, confirmed the need to preserve the foreign trade monopoly, not permitting the import and export of certain goods other than through the People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade. The Twelfth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) held between April 17 and April 25, 1923, which Lenin was also unable to attend owing to continued ill health, confirmed the inviolability of the foreign trade monopoly in the following decision: "The Congress confirms absolutely the inviolability of the foreign trade monopoly and the impermissibility of any deviation or vacillation in implementing it and instructs the new Central Committee to take regular measures to strengthen and develop the monopoly regime in foreign trade." (*The C.P.S.U. in Resolutions and Decisions of Congresses, Conferences and Plenary Meetings of the C.C.*, Russ. ed., Part I, 1954, p. 682). p. 409

¹⁴⁷ This article belongs to a series dictated in January, February and early March 1923. The others are "Pages from a Diary", "On Co-operation", "Our Revolution (Apropos of N. Sukhanov's Notes)", "How to Reorganise the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection (Proposal to the Twelfth Party Congress)". They were Lenin's last articles and completed the plan he had elaborated for the building of socialism in the U.S.S.R. He pointed out the need to create a heavy industry as the material basis of socialism and communism and developed his co-operative plan for the transformation of agriculture on socialist lines; the articles dealt with the cultural revolution, ways and means of improving the state apparatus and indicated the need to ensure the unity of the Party and its role as the guiding and directing force in the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat and in socialist construction. p. 414

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1921-22*—363

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Alexander I (Romanov) (1777-1825)—Emperor of Russia (1801-25).—66

Alexeyev, M. V. (1857-1918)—tsarist general, monarchist and counter-revolutionary. In 1915 he was appointed Chief of Staff of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief and after the February 1917 Revolution Supreme Commander-in-Chief and then military adviser to the Provisional Government. After the victory of the October Socialist Revolution he was one of the chief instigators of counter-revolution and headed the Whiteguard Volunteer Army organised in the North Caucasus with the active assistance of British and French imperialists to fight against Soviet power.—87

Alexinsky, G. A. (b. 1879)—Social-Democrat in the early stages of his political career, in 1905-07 adhered to the Bolsheviks and was member of the Social-Democratic group in the Second Duma. In the

years of reaction he was otzovist and one of the organisers of the anti-Party *Vpered* group. With the outbreak of the First World War he took a social-chauvinist stand and contributed to the reactionary newspaper *Russkaya Volya*. After the February 1917 Revolution he joined Plekhanov's *Yedinstvo (Unity)* group. In July 1917, he worked with the military counter-intelligence and faked documents slandering Lenin and the Bolsheviks, calling them German spies. After the October Socialist Revolution he lived abroad as a whiteguard émigré.—289

Aulard, Alphonse (1849-1928)—prominent French bourgeois historian, author of a number of works on history, published archive materials on the history of the French bourgeois revolution of the late 18th century. In 1919 he protested in the press against the blockade of Soviet Russia and the slander of Communists, but also opposed the dictatorship of the proletariat.—178

B

Barbusse, Henri (1873-1935)—French writer, Communist, outstanding fighter against fascism. His revolutionary, anti-militarist views took shape under the influence of the First World War, in which he took part, and of the Great October Socialist Revolution. His novels *Le Feu* (1916) and *Clarté* (1919) truthfully and vividly show the imperialist character of the First World War. He was a true and devoted friend of the Soviet Union from the first days of its existence and played an active part in the movement against anti-Soviet intervention in 1918-20. In the 1920s and 1930s Barbusse was prominent in the movement of progressive intellectuals in France and throughout the world against war and fascism.—146

Bonar Law—see *Law, Andrew Bonar*.

Braun, M. I.—see *Bronski, M. G.*
Bronski, M. G. (Braun, M. I.) (1882-1941)—Polish Socialist-Democrat, afterwards member of the Bolshevik Party. In 1907-17 he was in political exile in Switzerland. During the First World War he adhered to the Zimmerwald Left. In the summer of 1917 Bronski came to Russia and worked as agitator and propagandist of the Petrograd Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.). After the October Socialist Revolution he occupied various managerial and diplomatic posts and later on was engaged in educational work.

Lenin refers to his book *Wer*

soll die Kriegsrechnung bezahlen? Zur Wirtschaftspolitik des kapitalistischen Bankrotts (Who is to Pay War Debts? The Economic Policy of Capitalist Bankruptcy) published in Leipzig in 1920 under the pseudonym of *M. I. Braun*.—245, 246

Buisson, Ferdinand (1841-1932)—French politician, leading member of the Radical-Socialist Party; from 1907 professor of pedagogy at the Sorbonne; member of the Chamber of Deputies in 1902-14 and 1919-24; drew up a number of parliamentary bills, mainly on education.—178

Bukharin, N. I. (1888-1938)—member of the R.S.D.L.P. from 1906. During the First World War he took an anti-Leninist stand on questions of the state, imperialism, the right of nations to self-determination, etc. He supported the Menshevik Trotskyist theory that the socialist revolution could not triumph in Russia. After the October Revolution he was editor of *Pravda*, member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee and the Executive Committee of the Comintern. He repeatedly opposed the Party's Leninist policy—in 1918, he headed an anti-Party group of "Left Communists", during the discussion on trade unions (1920-21) he first occupied a "buffer" position and then joined Trotsky's anti-Party group; from 1928 headed the Right-wing opposition in the Party. In 1929 he was expelled from the Political Bureau of the Central Committee and the Executive Committee of the Comintern.

Later on he was expelled from the Party for his anti-Party activity.—409, 410, 411, 412

Bullitt, William Christian (b. 1891)—American diplomat and journalist. In 1919 he was sent on a special (unofficial) mission to Soviet Russia where he had talks with People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs Chicherin, and met Lenin and had talks with him. After the establishment of diplomatic relations between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. in November 1933 he was appointed Ambassador to the U.S.S.R.—145, 150, 151, 165, 181, 234, 295, 358

C

Chernov, V. M. (1876-1952)—one of the Socialist-Revolutionary leaders; after the February 1917 Revolution he was Minister of Agriculture in the coalition Provisional Government. After the October Socialist Revolution he took part in organising counter-revolutionary acts against Soviet power. Whiteguard émigré from 1920.—56, 59, 61, 64, 375

Chernyshevsky, N. G. (1828-1889)—Russian revolutionary democrat, utopian socialist, scientist, writer, literary critic and materialist philosopher, ideologist and leader of the Russian revolutionary movement in the 1860s. Lenin described Chernyshevsky as one of the predecessors of the Russian revolutionary Social-Democracy. In 1862 he was arrested and spent most of his life in prison and exile.—108

Chicherin, G. V. (1872-1936)—Soviet statesman and diplomat, took part in the revolutionary movement from 1904. From 1905 he lived abroad, returned to Russia in January 1918. He joined the Bolshevik Party, was appointed Deputy People's Commissar and in May 1918 People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs. He led Soviet delegations at the Genoa and Lausanne conferences (1922-23). He was member of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee and Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R.; at the Fourteenth and Fifteenth congresses of the Party he was elected member of the Central Committee.—180, 219, 258, 259, 280, 297, 342, 343, 348, 365, 367, 421, 425

Christensen, Parley Parker. (b. 1869)—American politician and public figure, lawyer; candidate of the Workers' and Farmers' Party for the Presidency in the 1920 elections. Subsequently retired from politics.—355

Churchill, Winston Leonard Spencer (1874-1965)—prominent English politician, one of the leaders of the Conservative Party. Held many ministerial posts; was one of the chief instigators and organisers of armed intervention against Soviet Russia in 1918-20. Prime Minister in 1940-45 and 1951-55.—159, 173, 205, 207, 270

Clauzevitz, Karl (1780-1831)—Prussian general, one of the leading military theoreticians, prominent exponent of Prussian military ideology; his main work was *On War*.—76

Clemenceau, Georges Benjamin (1841-1929)—French politician, Prime Minister in 1906-09 and 1917-20; Chairman of the Paris Peace Conference in 1919-20; one of the instigators and organisers of armed intervention against Soviet Russia. In 1920 was defeated at the presidential elections and retired from politics.—179, 204, 205, 248, 250

Curzon, Lord George Nathaniel (1859-1925)—English statesman, one of the leaders of the Conservative Party; Foreign Minister in 1919-23, one of the chief organisers of armed intervention against Soviet Russia. At the Genoa and Lausanne conferences he took a strongly anti-Soviet stand.—258, 270

D

Dan, F. I. (Gurvich) (1871-1947)—one of the Menshevik leaders, social-chauvinist during the First World War; after the February 1917 Revolution was a member of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet and the Presidium of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, First Convocation; supported the bourgeois Provisional Government. After the October Socialist Revolution he actively opposed Soviet power. In 1922 he was banished from the country for his counter-revolutionary activity.—262

Debs, Eugene (1855-1926)—American labour leader, headed the Left wing of the Socialist Party; one of the founders of the Industrial Workers of the World (1905); in 1918 he

was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment for his campaign against the imperialist war. He enthusiastically greeted the October Socialist Revolution.—110

Denikin, A. I. (1872-1947)—tsarist general, a conspicuous leader of the Russian bourgeois-landowner counter-revolution in 1918-20. In 1919, marched on Moscow at the head of the whiteguard armies of Southern Russia, but was defeated. In April 1920 he handed the command of the remaining troops to Wrangel and emigrated to Britain.—144, 145, 149, 153, 155, 160, 173, 174, 179, 188, 192, 193, 194, 195, 202, 205, 211, 217, 222, 234, 235, 238, 263, 267, 269, 308, 336, 358, 371, 374, 378, 399

Dreyfus, Alfred (1859-1935)—French General Staff officer, a Jew by nationality. In 1894, on a trumped-up charge of espionage and high treason he was cashiered and sentenced by a court-martial to penal servitude for life. The Dreyfus affair was a sharp clash between the progressive and reactionary forces of France. Progressive public circles in many countries came out in defence of Dreyfus. Under the pressure of public opinion Dreyfus was pardoned and released from prison in 1899 and in 1906 he was fully rehabilitated.—179

Dukhonin, N. N. (1876-1917)—tsarist general, monarchist. In September 1917 the Provisional Government appointed him Chief of Staff of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief. After the October Socialist Revolution he proclaimed himself Supreme

Commander-in-Chief and tried to organise a counter-revolutionary revolt against Soviet power. Following his refusal to comply with the injunction of the Council of People's Commissars of November 20, 1917, to cease hostilities for the purpose of starting peace negotiations he was relieved of his post. On December 3 he was killed by the soldiers.—20, 21

Dzerzhinsky, F. E. (1877-1926)—outstanding figure of the Communist Party and the Soviet state, member of the Communist Party since 1895; one of the organisers of Social-Democracy in Poland and Lithuania. After the February 1917 Revolution he conducted Party work in Moscow. He was a member of the Revolutionary Military Centre set up by the Central Committee of the Party to guide the armed uprising that started the October Socialist Revolution. After the Revolution he was a member of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, Chairman of the Cheka (All-Russia Extraordinary Commission to Combat Counter-revolution, Sabotage and Profiteering), People's Commissar of the Interior, People's Commissar of Railways, Chairman of the United State Political Department (O.G.P.U.) and Chairman of the Supreme Economic Council. From August 1917 he was member of the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.), and from June 1924—candidate member of the Political Bureau and member of the Organising Bureau of the C.P.S.U.(B.) Central Committee.—195

E

Eyre, Lincoln—American journalist, correspondent of the newspaper *The World*. In February 1920 he came to Soviet Russia to interview Lenin. Lenin received him and had a talk with him.—204

F

Farbman, Michael, S. (b. 1880)—journalist, special correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* and *Chicago Daily News* in 1917 and later on London correspondent of *Novaya Zhizn*. From 1920 he was Moscow correspondent of the *Chicago Daily News* and then of the *Manchester Guardian* and *Observer*.—386

Foch, Ferdinand (1851-1929)—Marshal of France. During the First World War he was Chief of the General Staff (from May 1917), Chairman of the Allied War Council (from January 1918) and Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Armies (from April 1918). He was one of the authors of plans for anti-Soviet armed intervention in 1918-20.—204, 207

France, Anatole (Thibault) (1844-1924)—outstanding realist writer of France. In his books he truthfully exposed the evils of bourgeois society and the hypocrisy of bourgeois civilisation and bourgeois morality. He enthusiastically welcomed the October Socialist Revolution and the establishment of the Soviet state and strongly protested against anti-Soviet armed intervention.

He supported the French Communist Party.—178

Gompers, Samuel (1850-1924)—reactionary American trade unionist, betrayed the interests of the working class, was the enemy of communism and the U.S.S.R.; for over 40 years President of the A.F.L., directed its activity along the lines of class collaboration and rejection of the revolutionary struggle; during the First World War he took a social-chauvinist stand, and supported Woodrow Wilson's policy; advocated Soviet Russia's isolation.—116

Gotz, A. R. (1882-1940)—one of the Socialist-Revolutionary leaders, took an active part in the work of the party's "Fighting Organisation" from 1906; after the February 1917 Revolution he became one of the leaders of the Socialist-Revolutionary section of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' Deputies and the All-Russia Central Executive Committee. After the October Socialist Revolution he engaged in counter-revolutionary activity, organised terrorist acts and armed sallies against Soviet power. In 1920 he was arrested for his counter-revolutionary activity and in 1922 sentenced to be shot, but the sentence was commuted to imprisonment.—262

Guest, Leslie (b. 1877)—member of the British Labour Party, one of the trade union leaders, opposed the class struggle and the dictatorship of the proletariat; in 1920 came to Soviet Russia as member of the delegation of English workers.—220

Gukovsky, I. E. (1871-1921)—

participated in the revolutionary movement from the 1890s, worked in the Social-Democratic organisations of St. Petersburg and Baku; after the February 1917 Revolution he was treasurer of the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) and in 1918, Deputy Finance Minister. Subsequently he was envoy of the R.S.F.S.R. to Estonia.—185, 258

Gulkevich, K. N.—Kolchak's emissary in Sweden.—188

H

Harding, Warren Gamaliel (1865-1923)—reactionary American statesman, President of the United States in 1921-23. The Harding Administration, in which Hoover, Hughes and Mellon, representatives of monopoly capital, dominated, pursued an imperialist policy of subjugating China, Latin American and other countries, suppressing the working-class movement in the United States and opposing the establishment of diplomatic and trade relations with the U.S.S.R.—295, 296

Henderson, Arthur (1863-1935)—one of the leaders of the Labour Party and trade union movement in Britain; Chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party in 1908-10 and 1914-17. During the First World War he took a social-chauvinist stand, entered Asquith's Coalition Ministry and then Lloyd George's War Ministry. After the February 1917 Revolution he visited Russia to agitate for the continuation of the war. He was hostile in his attitude to the

October Socialist Revolution. In 1919 he was one of the organisers of the Berne (Second) International and in 1923, when the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals merged, became Chairman of the Executive Committee of the united Second International.—116

Herriot, Edouard (1872-1957)—prominent French politician and public figure, one of the leaders of the bourgeois Radical-Socialist Party, man of letters; repeatedly held ministerial posts and headed the French Government. He visited the U.S.S.R. in 1922 and 1933. In 1924-25 he was Premier of the "Left bloc" Government which recognised the U.S.S.R. Later on, he was President of the Chamber of Deputies. After the Second World War Herriot opposed the revival of German militarism and worked for co-operation between France and the Soviet Union; he was active member of the U.S.S.R.-France Society.—386

Hindenburg, Paul (1847-1934)—German military and political figure, monarchist; in 1916-17 Chief of Staff and actually Commander-in-Chief of the German army. In 1917-18 he headed a war party which called for the crushing and dismemberment of Soviet Russia; President of the German Republic, 1925-34; pursued a reactionary policy and encouraged monarchist, military and fascist organisations. On January 30, 1933, he officially handed power over to Hitler.—63

Hohenzollern—see *Wilhelm II (Hohenzollern)*.

Hoover, Herbert Clark (b. 1874)—reactionary American politician, representative of monopoly capital, shareholder of a number of joint-stock companies in Russia that were nationalised after the October Socialist Revolution. He took active part in preparing anti-Soviet intervention in 1918-20. In 1919 he stood at the head of the American Relief Administration. President of the United States, 1929-33.—348

J

Joffe, A. A. (1883-1927)—participant in the Social-Democratic movement from the late 1890s. After the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. he joined the Mensheviks. In 1908 Trotsky and he published the newspaper *Vperyod* in Vienna. In March 1917 became a member of the so-called Inter-District Organisation in Petrograd. At the Sixth Party Congress, together with the other members of the Inter-District Organisation, he was admitted into the Party. At the time of the Brest peace talks he adhered to the "Left Communists". In April 1918 he was appointed Ambassador to Berlin and later held other diplomatic posts. In the 1925-27 period he supported the Trotskyist opposition.—185, 384

K

Kalinin, M. I. (1875-1946)—outstanding figure of the Communist Party and the Soviet state, member of the Party from 1898; active participant

in the first Russian revolution. He conducted Party work in St. Petersburg, Tiflis, Revel (Tallinn), Moscow and elsewhere. In 1912, at the Sixth (Prague) Conference, he was elected candidate member of the Central Committee and later was coopted into the Russian Bureau of the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. Kalinin was one of the organisers of the Bolshevik newspaper *Pravda* and took an active part in the February 1917 Revolution in Petrograd. After the October Socialist Revolution he was Petrograd City Governor and from 1919, Chairman of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee; from 1922 he was Chairman of the U.S.S.R. Central Executive Committee and from 1938, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. From 1919 Kalinin was member of the Central Committee of the Party, and from 1926, member of the Political Bureau of the C.P.S.U.(B.).—342

Kamenev, L. B. (Rosenfeld) (1883-1936)—member of the R.S.D.L.P. from 1901. During the years of reaction he adopted a conciliatory attitude towards liquidators and *otzovists*. After the February 1917 Revolution he opposed the Party's line for the socialist revolution. In October 1917 he and Zinoviev published a statement in the semi-Menshevik newspaper *Novaya Zhizn* expressing disagreement with the decision of the Central Committee on insurrection and thus betrayed the Party's plans to the Provisional Government. After the

October Socialist Revolution he was Chairman of the Moscow Soviet, Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, Chairman of the Council of Labour and Defence and member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee. He repeatedly opposed the Party's Leninist policy. In November 1917 he supported the establishment of a coalition government with the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries participating; in 1925 he was one of the organisers of the "New Opposition" and in 1926, one of the leaders of the anti-Party Trotsky-Zinoviev bloc. In 1927, at the Fifteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U.(B.), he was expelled from the Party as an active participant in the Trotsky opposition. Reinstated in the Party in 1928, he was again expelled in 1932. In 1933 he was reinstated in the Party and in 1934 expelled for a third time for his anti-Party activity.—258, 270, 275, 302, 342

Kamkov, B. D. (Katz) (1885-1938)—member of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party from 1907, one of the Left Socialist-Revolutionary leaders; he was involved in the murder of German Ambassador Mirbach and in the revolt of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries in Moscow in July 1918. Later lived in emigration.—101

Katznelson, Z. B.—chief of the Economic Section of the United State Political Department (O.G.P.U.) in 1922-25.—391

Kautsky, Karl (1854-1938)—one of the leaders of the German Social-Democratic Party and the Second International; from 1883 to 1917 he was editor-in-

chief of *Die Neue Zeit*, the theoretical organ of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany. Participated in the socialist movement from 1874. Under the influence of Marx and Engels he adopted Marxism though even at that time he vacillated towards opportunism. On the eve of the First World War he completely broke with the theory and practice of revolutionary Marxism and became the ideologist of international centrism (Kautskyism); during the war he supported the Zimmerwald extreme Right wing covering up his social-chauvinism with internationalist phrase-mongering. In 1917 he was one of the founders of the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany. Kautsky came out against the dictatorship of the proletariat and in defence of bourgeois democracy. He was one of the promoters of the rehabilitation of the Second International. He opposed the Soviet state to the end of his life.—195

Kerensky, A. F. (b. 1881)—lawyer, one of the Socialist-Revolutionary leaders, confirmed defencist during the First World War; after the February 1917 Revolution he was member of the Executive Committee and Deputy Chairman of the Petrograd Soviet from the Socialist-Revolutionary Party; Minister of Justice in the first Provisional Government and Naval and War Minister in the Second Provisional Government; from July 8 (21), 1917, Minister-Chairman of the coalition Provisional Government. One

of those responsible for the shooting of workers in Petrograd, July 1917. After the October Socialist Revolution he and General Krasnov organised a counter-revolutionary anti-Soviet revolt. After the rout of the revolt he fled abroad. In emigration he was one of the organisers of the counter-revolutionary "League of Struggle for People's Freedom".—36, 50, 52, 56, 58, 59, 61, 64, 97, 109, 118, 138, 143, 217, 271, 331, 357, 399

Keynes, John Maynard (1883-1946)—British bourgeois economist, apologist of state-monopoly capitalism, author of a "theory" according to which it was possible under capitalism to overcome the economic crises and unemployment inherent in that system. Keynes's views greatly influenced modern bourgeois political economy.—243, 244, 245, 247, 248, 249, 354

Kolchak, A. V. (1873-1920)—tsarist admiral, monarchist, commander of the Black Sea Fleet in 1917. After the October Socialist Revolution, helped by the U.S.A., Britain and France, he proclaimed himself Supreme Ruler of Russia and headed the military bourgeois landlord owner dictatorship in the Urals, Siberia and the Far East (end of 1918-beginning of 1920). In February 1920 he was sentenced to be shot by the Irkutsk Revolutionary Military Committee.—145, 149, 153, 154, 155, 158, 176, 179, 180, 183, 188, 190, 192, 202, 205, 211, 217, 222, 234, 235, 238, 263, 267, 269, 294, 336, 358, 371, 374, 393

Kopp, V. L. (1880-1930)—Soviet diplomat, participant in the

working-class movement since 1898. After the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. he joined the Mensheviks. During the First World War he was taken prisoner by the Germans. After his release from captivity in the summer of 1918 he was appointed counsellor to the mission of the R.S.F.S.R. in Germany. Subsequently he was Soviet Ambassador to Japan and Sweden.—258

Krasin, L. B. (1870-1926)—one of the oldest members of the Communist Party, prominent Soviet diplomat and economic executive; participated in the revolutionary movement from the late 1880s (in St. Petersburg, Nizhni-Novgorod, Baku and elsewhere); after the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. he joined the Bolsheviks. During the years of reaction he withdrew from politics. After the October Socialist Revolution he became a member of the Presidium of the Supreme Economic Council, People's Commissar of Industry and Trade and People's Commissar of Railways. From 1919 he held various diplomatic posts. He led the delegation which conducted peace talks with Estonia; from 1921 to 1923 he was Soviet trade representative in London and People's Commissar of Foreign Trade; in 1924, Ambassador to France and People's Commissar of Foreign Trade; from 1925 he was Ambassador to Britain. At the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Party congresses he was elected member of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.).—219, 244, 280, 297, 301, 302, 336, 348,

364, 401, 409, 410, 411, 412

Krasnov, P. N. (1869-1947)—tsarist general; one of the leaders of the Kornilov revolt in August 1917. In November 1917 he commanded the troops moved by Kerensky against Petrograd. In 1918-19 he commanded the Whiteguard Cossack Army on the Don. In 1919 he fled to Germany where he continued to engage in counter-revolutionary, anti-Soviet activity. During the war of Hitler Germany against the Soviet Union he collaborated with the Nazis. In 1945 he was arrested and in 1947 the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R. sentenced him, with other war criminals, to death.—143, 375

Krestinsky N. N. (1883-1938)—Soviet statesman, member of the R.S.D.L.P. since 1905, Bolshevik. In 1918 opposed the conclusion of the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty. During the discussion on the trade unions (1920-21) together with Trotsky took the anti-Leninist position. In 1937 was expelled from the Party for his anti-Party activity.—259

Krylenko, N. V. (1885-1938)—Soviet statesman, member of the R.S.D.L.P. from 1904, Bolshevik; conducted underground activity in Moscow and elsewhere and, during the First World War, in the army in the field. He took an active part in the October Socialist Revolution and entered the first Soviet Government as member of the Committee for War and Naval Affairs. In November 1917, after Dukhonin's dismissal, he was appointed Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the army. From

1918 Krylenko worked in the judiciary as Chairman of the Supreme Tribunal of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, Deputy People's Commissar and People's Commissar of Justice of the R.S.F.S.R., Procurator of the R.S.F.S.R. and, from 1936, People's Commissar of Justice of the U.S.S.R.—20, 21

L

Labourbe, Jeanne (1879-1919)—Communist, active participant in the Civil War in Russia against the interventionists and whiteguards. She was born in France and from 1896 lived in Poland where she joined the revolutionary movement. After the October Socialist Revolution she carried on Party work in Moscow and was one of the organisers of the "French Communist group". In 1919 she conducted underground work among French soldiers and sailors in Odessa. She was arrested and shot by the French counter-intelligence service.—170

Lapinsky, P. L.—Polish Communist, economist, author of a number of works on world economy.—247

Law, Andrew Bonar (1858-1923)—one of the leaders of the British Conservative Party, member of the Allied Council (1921-22). After the Genoa Conference he succeeded Lloyd George as Prime Minister (1922-23). Bonar Law was one of the instigators of the anti-Soviet policy of British imperialism.—221

Levi, Paul (1883-1930)—German Left Social-Democrat, member

of the Spartacus League; at the Inaugural Congress of the German Communist Party he was elected to the Central Committee of the Party; attended the Second Congress of the Comintern. In February 1921 he walked out of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and in April he was expelled from the Party for his anti-Party factional activity. Subsequently he rejoined the Social-Democratic Party and fought actively against the Communist Party of Germany and the Comintern.—244, 247

Liebknecht, Karl (1871-1919)—outstanding figure of the German and international working-class movement. In the pre-war years he actively fought opportunism and militarism. After the outbreak of the First World War he resolutely opposed support of Kaiser Wilhelm's Government in the war. He was one of the founders and leaders of the Spartacus League. In 1916 he was sentenced to penal servitude. During the November 1918 revolution, together with Rosa Luxemburg, he headed the revolutionary vanguard of the German workers, edited the newspaper *Die Rote Fahne*. Liebknecht was one of the founders of the Communist Party of Germany and leader of the Berlin workers during the January 1919 uprising. After the suppression of the uprising he was brutally murdered by the Noske gang.—33, 60, 214, 328

Lysis (Letaillier Eugène)—French journalist, reactionary politician, author of works on financial and political ques-

tions. Lenin refers to his book *Contre l'oligarchie financière en France (Against the Financial Oligarchy in France)* published in Paris in 1908.—240

Litvinov, M. M. (1876-1951)—one of the oldest members of the Communist Party, leading Soviet diplomat. He joined the revolutionary movement in the late 1890s, was active in circulating the newspaper *Iskra*. After the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. he joined the Bolsheviks. In 1918 he was appointed member of the Collegium of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. From 1921 he was Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, from 1930 to 1939 People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs and from 1941 to 1946 Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs.—165, 219

Lloyd George, David (1863-1945)—British statesman and politician, leader of the Liberal Party. From 1905 he played a prominent role in shaping the policy of British imperialism as President of the Board of Trade, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Minister of Munitions and Prime Minister (1916-22). He was one of the authors of the Treaty of Versailles, was active in organising anti-Soviet armed intervention and the economic blockade of Russia. He led the British delegation at the Genoa Conference (1922).—179, 205, 244, 248, 250, 354, 367, 371, 372

Loriot, Fernand (1870-1930)—participant in the working-class movement, member of the Socialist Party of France from 1901. During the First World War he occupied an

internationalist stand and followed the Zimmerwald Left group. Loriot was one of the founders of the Communist Party of France. In 1920 he spent about twelve months in prison on a charge of high treason, but he was acquitted by the jury. In 1925 he joined the Trotskyist opposition in the French Communist Party and in 1927 was expelled from the Party.—223

Lubersac, Jean—French lieutenant; monarchist, member of the French military mission in Russia in 1917-18. His talk with Lenin took place on February 27, 1918.—107

Luxemburg, Rosa (1871-1919)—prominent figure in the Polish, German and international working-class movement, one of the leaders of the Left wing of the Second International. From the end of the nineteenth century she vigorously combated revisionism in the ranks of Social-Democracy. During the First World War she adhered to the internationalist standpoint, and was the ideologist and one of the organisers of the Spartacus League. During the November 1918 revolution, together with Liebknecht, she headed the revolutionary vanguard of the German workers. She was one of the founders of the German Communist Party. In January 1919 she was murdered by the Noske gang.—328

M

Mannerheim, Carl Gustaf (1867-1951)—Finnish reactionary politician, tsarist general until 1917. In 1918 he commanded

a counter-revolutionary White Finnish Army which together with the German interventionists crushed the workers' revolution in Finland. Mannerheim was one of the organisers of anti-Soviet adventures of the Finnish reaction. He was closely connected with the fascist clique in Germany. During the war between Finland and the U.S.S.R., 1939-40 and 1941-44, he was Commander-in-Chief of the Finnish army. He was President of Finland, 1944-46, but had to resign under the pressure of democratic forces.—144, 145

Maring, H.—delegate to the Second Congress of the Comintern from the Communist Party of the Dutch Indies (Indonesia); worked on the commission on the national and colonial questions.—252

Martov, L. (Zederbaum, Y. O.) (1873-1923)—one of the Menshevik leaders, participated in the Social-Democratic movement from the 1890s. At the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. he headed the opportunist minority. During the years of reaction he was an ideologist of liquidationism and later an active member of the anti-Party "August" Conference (1912). During the First World War he took a centrist stand. After the February 1917 Revolution he headed a group of Menshevik internationalists. Following the October Socialist Revolution he adopted an anti-Soviet, counter-revolutionary position. In 1920 he emigrated and took an active part in the establishment of the Two-and-a-Half International in Vienna.—92

Marx, Karl (1818-1883)—founder of scientific communism, brilliant thinker, leader and teacher of the international proletariat. See Lenin's article "Karl Marx", *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, pp. 43-91.—410

Millerand, Alexandre Etienne (1859-1943)—French reactionary politician. In the 1890s he joined the Socialists. In 1899 he entered a bourgeois government and supported the policy which ran counter to the interests of the working class. In 1904 he was expelled from the Socialist Party. He occupied a number of ministerial posts and conducted a policy that suited the interests of French monopoly capital. He entertained a hostile attitude towards the October Socialist Revolution and Soviet power and was one of the organisers of anti-Soviet armed intervention, 1918-20. He was President of the Republic of France, 1920-24.—205

Milyukov, P. N. (1859-1943)—leader of the Cadet Party. After the February 1917 Revolution he was Foreign Minister in the first Provisional Government and zealously pursued an imperialist policy of "war to a victorious finish". In August 1917 he was one of the instigators of the Kornilov revolt. After the October Socialist Revolution he lived abroad and helped organise counter-revolution and armed intervention against the Soviet state.—101

Milyutin, V. P. (1884-1938)—participant in the revolutionary movement from 1903, member of the Bolshevik Party from 1910. From 1918

he occupied responsible government and economic posts—Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Economic Council, member of the Collegium of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, Chairman of the Central Statistical Board of the U.S.S.R. and Deputy Chairman of the State Planning Commission of the U.S.S.R.—307

Mirbach, Wilhelm (1871-1918)—German diplomat, member of the German delegation at the Brest-Litovsk peace talks. In 1918 he was German Minister to Moscow. On July 6, 1918, he was killed by the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries for the purpose of provoking a military clash between Germany and Soviet Russia.—80, 297

Monatte, Pierre—French anarcho-syndicalist, a prominent member of *Confédération générale du travail unitaire* (the General Confederation of United Labour). Following the October Socialist Revolution in Russia he joined the Communists and was co-opted on to the editorial board of *l'Humanité*. In 1925 he was expelled from the Communist Party for his anarcho-syndicalist deviation.—223

N

Nansen, Fridtjof (1861-1930)—leading Norwegian oceanologist, explorer of the Arctic and public figure. His attitude to Soviet Russia was deeply sympathetic. In 1921 and 1922 he was one of the organisers of relief for the starving population of Soviet Russia.—145, 165

Napoleon I (Bonaparte) (1769-1821)—Emperor of the French (1804-14 and 1815).—45, 57, 62, 63, 64, 66

Nicholas II (Romanov) (1868-1918)—the last Russian Emperor (1894-1917).—24, 52

O

Oleinikov—a whiteguard officer who came over to the side of Soviet power.—188

Orlando, Vittorio Emanuele (1860-1952)—Italian statesman, a leader of the Liberal Party, lawyer by profession. He favoured Italian intervention in the First World War on the side of the Entente. In 1917-19 he was Prime Minister of Italy. He led the Italian delegation at the Paris Peace Conference where he championed the territorial claims of the Italian imperialist bourgeoisie. In 1919 and 1920 he was Chairman of the Italian Parliament. After the establishment of Mussolini's fascist dictatorship he withdrew from active politics. From 1948 to 1952 he was member of the Italian Senate.—250

P

Pankhurst, Sylvia (1882-1960)—participant in the suffragist movement in Great Britain on the eve of the First World War. During the war she conducted open anti-war propaganda for which she was persecuted by the government. She took part in the establishment of the extreme Left "Socialist Federation of Workers", whose membership

consisted largely of women.—223

Petlyura, S. V. (1877-1926)—leader of the Ukrainian nationalist counter-revolution. After the October Socialist Revolution he tried to establish a bourgeois state in the Ukraine ("The Ukrainian People's Republic") with the help of the German imperialists and later of the Entente; he was head of the counter-revolutionary government of this "republic". After the rout of his bands in 1919 by the Red Army he fled to Poland from where he directed the invasion of Soviet territory by bandit gangs.—236

Pilsudski, Jósef (1867-1935)—Polish reactionary statesman, one of the leading organisers of the Polish bourgeois-land-owner state in 1918; rabid enemy of the U.S.S.R. and communism. In 1926 he effected a coup d'état and established a fascist regime in Poland.—222, 285, 290

Poincaré, Raymond (1860-1934)—French reactionary politician, Prime Minister, 1912-13, 1922-24 and 1926-29, President of France from 1913 to 1920. He championed the interests of the most aggressive French imperialist circles and was one of the instigators of the First World War; in respect to him the French people said, "*Poincaré, c'est la guerre*" ("*Poincaré is war*"). Bitter enemy of the U.S.S.R., he was one of the chief organisers of armed intervention against Soviet Russia, 1918-20.—367

Poole, Dewitt Clinton (b. 1885)—American diplomat, consul in Moscow from July 1917.

U.S. chargé d'affaires in Russia from November 1918 till June 1919. From October 1919 he was in charge of the Russian section of the State Department. Later conducted educational and publishing activity.—165

Q

Quelch, Tom—English Communist, prior to the formation of the Communist Party belonged to the Left wing of the British Socialist Party. In 1920 he was delegate to the Second Congress of the Communist International, at which he was elected to the Executive Committee of the Comintern.—257

R

Radek, Karl (1885-1939)—Social-Democrat from 1903, took part in the Polish and German working-class movement. After the February 1917 Revolution he came to Russia and joined the Bolshevik Party. At the time of Brest peace talks he adhered to the "Left Communists". From 1923 he was one of the leaders of the Trotskyist opposition. In 1927 he was expelled from the Party for his anti-Party and anti-Soviet activity. Reinstated in the Party in 1930 he was again expelled in 1936 for his anti-Party activity.—170, 365

Rasputin, G. Y. (Novykh) (1872-1916)—favourite of the last Russian Emperor Nicholas II and Empress Alexandra Fyodorovna. He was a peasant from Tobolsk Gubernia in

Siberia. Posing as a clairvoyant and healer he penetrated into court circles and exercised great influence on state affairs. The Rasputin phenomenon was typical of the moral degradation of the ruling upper classes in tsarist Russia. In December 1916 he was assassinated by a group of monarchists who had been exasperated by Rasputin's influence at court.—24

Renaudel, Pierre (1871-1935)—French politician, one of the leaders of the Right-wing Socialists, member of the Chamber of Deputies, 1914-19 and 1928-32; extreme social-chauvinist during the First World War; avowed enemy of communism and the U.S.S.R.; one of those who engineered the split of the Socialist Party at the Tours Congress in 1920 after the congress majority decided to affiliate to the Third International. In the 1930s he founded a pro-fascist party of "neo-Socialists".—116

Renner, Karl (Springer) (1870-1950)—Austrian politician, leader and theoretician of the Austrian Right-wing Social-Democrats, ideologist of the so-called "Austro-Marxism", one of the authors of the reformist theory of "cultural-national autonomy". During the First World War he took a social-chauvinist stand. He was Chancellor of Austria, 1919-20, and President of Austria, 1945-50.—116

Riezler—official of the German Foreign Ministry, acting Minister of Germany to Russia in 1918 after Count Mirbach's murder.—79

Robins, Raymond (1873-1954)—U.S. colonel, public figure;

head of the U.S. Red Cross Mission in Russia in 1917 and 1918. He welcomed the establishment of Soviet power; several times met Lenin. In the 1920s and 1930s he called for the recognition of the U.S.S.R. and establishment of diplomatic, trade and cultural relations. After the Second World War he called for the strengthening of friendship between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A.—78

Romanov—see *Nicholas II (Romanov)*.

Roy, Manabendra Nath (b. 1890)—former Indian Communist, delegate to the Second Congress of the Comintern. In 1929 he was expelled from the Communist Party and the Comintern as a Right-wing renegade.—252, 253, 256

S

Sadoul, Jacques (1881-1956)—French Communist; member of the French Socialist Party and social-patriot before 1918. In 1917 he was sent to Russia and became a Communist under the influence of the October Socialist Revolution. He took part in the work of the First Congress of the Comintern. In 1919, for his revolutionary activity he was three times sentenced to death *in absentia* by a French court-martial, but in 1924, upon his return to France, he was rehabilitated. Later on he fought actively for peace and friendship with the U.S.S.R.—107

Savinkov, B. V. (1879-1925)—one of the Socialist-Revolutionary leaders, active partici-

pant in the terrorist acts of its "Fighting Organisation" from 1903. After the February 1917 Revolution he supported the Provisional Government and held the post of Deputy War Minister. During the Civil War and foreign intervention he was one of the chief organisers of whiteguard revolts and conspiracies against Soviet power; subsequently a whiteguard émigré. In 1924 he attempted to cross the Soviet frontier, but was arrested and sentenced to imprisonment.—311, 326

Sazonov, S. D. (1861-1927)—Russian diplomat, Foreign Minister, 1910-16; Ambassador to London in 1917; after the October Socialist Revolution he was Kolchak's and then Denikin's representative in Paris.—188, 189

Scheidemann, Philipp (1865-1939)—one of the leaders of the German Social-Democracy, extreme opportunist; avowed social-chauvinist during the First World War. At the time of the November revolution in Germany he instigated the baiting and persecution of members of the Spartacus League. From February till June 1919 he was Premier of the Coalition Government of the Weimar Republic. From 1918 to 1921 he brutally suppressed the German working-class movement.—116, 198, 328

Shaw, Tom (1872-1938)—one of the leaders of the Right wing of the British Labour Party, prominent in the trade union movement. In 1920 he was member of the English workers' delegation which visited the Soviet Union.—220

Skólski, Leopold—Polish politician, leader of the "national-popular association"; Prime Minister, 1919-20, started peace talks with Soviet Russia. In face of opposition on the part of the aggressive commercial and industrial circles the Skólski Cabinet resigned.—237

Spargo, John (b. 1876)—American Right-wing Socialist; social-chauvinist during the First World War; left the Socialist Party in 1917. He wrote a series of slanderous books and pamphlets about Soviet Russia and the Bolsheviks.—289

Spiridonova, M. A. (b. 1889)—one of the founders and leaders of the Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party. After the October Socialist Revolution she was a member of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee; came out against the Brest peace and other acts of Soviet power; in July 1918 she took part in the revolt of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries in Moscow. Later on she retired from politics.—96, 101

Stolypin, P. N. (1862-1911)—out and out reactionary and monarchist, the butcher of the Russian Revolution of 1905-07; Minister of the Interior from April 1906 and Prime Minister from July of the same year. Stolypin gave his name to the period of "Stolypin reaction" (1908-10) marked by the severest repressions against those participating in the revolutionary movement. He was the author of an agrarian reform carried out in the interests of the land-owners and kulaks.—57

T

Trotsky, L. D. (Bronstein) (1879-1940)—sworn enemy of Leninism. After the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. he joined the Mensheviks and from then on conducted a fight against the Bolsheviks on all questions of the theory and practice of the socialist revolution. In 1912 he set up the anti-Party August bloc. During the First World War he took a centrist stand. After the February 1917 Revolution he joined the Inter-District Organisation with which he was admitted into the Party at the Sixth Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.). After the October Socialist Revolution he held the posts of People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, People's Commissar for War and Navy, Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic; he was also member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee and of the Executive Committee of the Comintern. In 1918 he opposed the conclusion of peace at Brest-Litovsk; as the head of the Soviet delegation he refused to sign a treaty in spite of the Central Committee's decision, and eventually the Soviet Government had to conclude peace with Germany on terms that were still more harsh. During the discussion on the trade unions, 1920-21, he led the anti-Leninist opposition. From 1923 he conducted a vigorous factional struggle against the general line of the Party and Lenin's programme of socialist construction, claiming that socialism could

not triumph in the U.S.S.R. In his struggle against the Party he took the path of anti-Soviet acts. In 1927 he was expelled from the Party and in 1929 was banished from the U.S.S.R. for his anti-Soviet activity. In 1932 he was deprived of Soviet citizenship.—128, 234, 348, 372, 373

Tsereteli, I. G. (1882-1956)—one of the Menshevik leaders. After the February 1917 Revolution he was a member of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet, defencist, supported coalition with the bourgeoisie. In May 1917 he entered the bourgeois Provisional Government as Minister of Posts and Telegraph. After the July 1917 events he became Minister of the Interior and was one of the instigators of the persecution of the Bolsheviks. After the October Socialist Revolution he was one of the leaders of the Menshevik counter-revolutionary government in Georgia. Following the establishment of Soviet power in Georgia he went abroad as a whiteguard émigré. In 1923 he was one of the founders of the United (Second) Socialist Workers' International.—56, 61

U

Urquhart, John Leslie (1874-1933)—leading English industrialist and financier, director of many English and Russian-English companies in Russia, nationalised by the Soviet Government after the October Socialist Revolution. He was one of the organisers

of the struggle of the counter-revolutionary forces against Soviet Russia in 1918-20. In the 1920s he made repeated attempts to recover his property in Soviet Russia on concession terms.—347, 390, 391, 400, 401

V

Vanderlip, Washington (b. 1867)—in 1920-21 he came to Soviet Russia and negotiated for concessions on Kamchatka; he met Lenin and had talks with him.—292, 293, 295, 296, 297, 298

Vanderlip, Frank Arthur (1864-1937)—big American financier, author of *What Happened to Europe?* (1920) and other works on economic and financial questions.—296

Vinnichenko, V. K. (b. 1880)—Ukrainian writer, bourgeois nationalist; one of the leaders of the Menshevik nationalist Ukrainian Social-Democratic Workers' Party; after the February 1917 Revolution he was one of the organisers of counter-revolutionary Central Rada and then together with Petlyura headed the Directory (the nationalist government of the Ukraine in 1918 and 1919), furthering the interests of the German, and later of Anglo-French, imperialists; subsequently a whiteguard émigré.—56

W

Washington, George (1732-1799)—outstanding American statesman at the time of the struggle of the English colonies in North America for independence (1775-83), Com-

mander-in-Chief of the colonial forces, first President of the United States (1789-97).—296

Wilhelm II (Hohenzollern) (1859-1941)—last German Emperor (1888-1918).—15, 18, 33, 124, 225, 261

Wilson, Thomas Woodrow (1856-1924)—President of the United States in 1913-21, put in power by the American financial oligarchy. During the First World War he at first pursued a policy of neutrality which was to the advantage of the American capitalists who grew fat on war contracts; then he contributed towards the entry of the United States into war on the side of the Entente. In January 1918 he came forward with a demagogic "programme of peace" (Wilson's Fourteen Points) which actually reflected the American imperialists' bid for world supremacy. Wilson took an active part in the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 and proposed the creation of the League of Nations; he was one of the instigators and organisers of armed intervention against Soviet Russia.—110, 142, 165, 179, 248, 250

Wrangel, P. N. (1878-1928)—whiteguard general, monarchist, the creature of the Entente imperialists, one of the leaders of counter-revolution in the South of Russia. In November 1920, after the rout of his forces by the Red Army in North Tauria and the Crimea, he fled abroad.—220, 222, 233, 234, 238, 239, 258, 263, 266, 268, 269, 271, 272, 277, 278, 283, 290, 302, 315, 316, 326

Y

Yudenich, N. N. (1862-1933)—tsarist general, one of the organisers of counter-revolution after the establishment of Soviet power. In 1919 he was in command of the white-guard forces of the "North-Western Government" (set up in Estonia) and twice made attempts to seize Petrograd, but was defeated by the Red Army. Subsequently a white-guard émigré.—153, 155, 158, 159, 173, 179, 183, 188, 189, 190, 211, 222, 238, 269

Z

Zinoviev, G. Y. (Radomyslsky) (1883-1936)—member of the R.S.D.L.P. from 1901. During the years of reaction he took a conciliatory attitude towards liquidators and otzovists. At the time of the preparation and carrying out of the October Socialist Revolution occupied a vacillating stand. In October 1917 he and Kamenev published a statement in the semi-Menshevik newspaper

Novaya Zhizn expressing their disagreement with the decision of the Central Committee on the insurrection and thus betrayed the Party's plans to the Provisional Government. After the October Socialist Revolution he was Chairman of the Petrograd Soviet, member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Comintern. He repeatedly opposed the Party's Leninist policy. In November 1917 he supported the establishment of a coalition government with the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries participating; in 1925 he was one of the organisers of the "New Opposition", and in 1926 one of the leaders of the anti-Party Trotsky-Zinoviev bloc. In November 1927 he was expelled from the Party for his factional activity. Reinstated in the Party in 1928, he was again expelled in 1932. In 1933 he was reinstated in the Party and in 1934 was expelled for a third time for his anti-Party activity.—328

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В. И. ЛЕНИН
О ВНЕШНÉЙ ПОЛИТИКЕ
СОВЕТСКОГО ГОСУДАРСТВА

На английском языке